

Can Art Influence Political Policy on the Environment?

A Case Study Examining Rolf Groven's Eco-Art

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Preface

I am not Norwegian. I was not born here in Norway, and I did not grow up here. I do not even have any Norwegian heritage that I am aware of. I grew up in a little place we call New Hampshire. It lies far away, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and it is part of the United States of America.

I came to Norway in August 2009 because I had developed an academic fascination with the philosophy behind sustainable development. It seemed to me (after doing some cursory research) that the Norwegian state has a rich, complex relationship with that philosophy. During the one and a half years I have spent in Norway, I have tried to learn about the culture here, the language, the history and the people, especially from an ecological perspective. However, I could never hope to have such an innate and deep understanding of Norwegian culture as someone who was actually born here. I would like to preface this thesis by saying that it is not my intention to generalize, stereotype or oversimplify the profound, intricate culture, the remarkable history or the multifaceted politics of Norway.

I do not see my foreignness as a drawback, necessarily. When it comes to this thesis, I hope that my ability to look at Norwegian culture from an unaccustomed perspective, an American perspective, will prove beneficial. I research as someone who was raised in a distinctly different political culture: in the third largest country in the world (by area and population), where socialized benefits are limited and where businesses have the same rights as people (ie: Corporate Personhood). Some parts of this thesis would have been easier to write if I were Norwegian, as I would have more base knowledge regarding laws, historical events and people in this country. However, I have the unique ability to analyze culture from another perspective.

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For their assistance in carrying out the data collection for this thesis, thank you to Frithjof Bringager and Kjersti Bartnes Rygg. I would also like to thank all of my interview informants and survey participants for giving their time and sharing their perspectives for this project. Their kindness and insights were most valuable to this project and to me personally.

Thanks to the artists and image sources: Rolf Groven, the National Gallery, Finn Graff, Edward Burtynsky, Stig, Ørnulf Opdahl and Gøril Guddal of Galleri G Guddal in Rosendal.

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"Writing without revising is the literary equivalent of waltzing gaily out of the house in your underwear." - Patricia Fuller 2007

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Key Questions

"Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deadline: to dismantle in order to build 'a social organism as a work of art'"

- Joseph Beuys 1974:48

1. Can art influence political policy on the environment?
2. How does Rolf Groven's painting *Oljemaleri* convey a persuasive political message to its audience?
3. What can the interviews, questionnaires and literature reviewed in this thesis tell us about the relationship between Norwegian landscape and culture?

Introduction

"When I was 23 years old, I thought I could change the world. I hope you are a bit wiser."

- Rolf Groven, interview: 19 September 2010



Figure 1 *Oljemaleri*, 1975 by Rolf Groven. Oil on canvas, 180x180cm, Privately owned

In Norwegian history classes, school children write essays comparing Rolf Groven's pivotal 1975 work, *Oljemaleri* to the original painting it references: *Brudeferden i Hardanger* by Adolph Tidemand and Hans Gude (see Fig. 2 on

page 19) (Groven 2005). Groven uses cultural symbols to convey a rhetorical message visually. The painting depicts a subversive, hyperbolic warning. It is not only a protest against what is happening or has happened, it also conveys fear for the future based on Groven's perception of Norwegian environmental policy.

As time goes by, the Norwegian landscape has become a palimpsest¹, both due to its changing function and its cultural value (Crang 1998:22). Many researchers have reflected on the paradoxical relationship Norway has with nature vis a vis conservation (Bakke 2001:10) and oil (Ekman 18.11.2005). In this thesis, I will illustrate that Groven's *Oljemaleri* reflects an innate conflict in Norwegian environmental policy. Furthermore, I will demonstrate the ways in which artists attempt to influence political policy using traditional media and more expanded fields of practice such as environmental art or community art projects (Krauss Spring 1979:41).

This thesis focuses on Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri*, an oil painting, as a case study within the wide spectrum of works by ecologically conscious artists. I have employed a combination of methods including: (1) questionnaire data from 63 respondents interpreting visual symbols in *Oljemaleri*; (2) interviews with locals in the Hardanger landscape; (3) conversations with Rolf Groven; (4) literature review and (5) in-depth interviews with 43 Norwegians about a broad range of topics.

Roland Barthes' writings about visual rhetoric and semiotic analysis (namely, the "signifier" and the "signified") provide theoretical support for the methodology. The literature review portions of this thesis will cite contemporary art historians like Gunnar Danbolt, Sue Spaid and Thomas Lawson. In addition,

¹ palimpsest: a medieval writing tablet reused but never fully erased. It serves as a metaphor for landscapes that change in use but where remnants of old uses remain.

ecosophers Arne Næss and Felix Guattari provide a philosophical background for the broader cultural analysis of Norwegian environmental policy.

Art can be defined as a wide range of creations or actions. Artworks can include theatrical performances, literary works, advertising, films, musical pieces, visual artworks like sculpture, paintings, posters mixed media or collages, documentation of processes and much more.

One longer and more extensive survey of several types of art within a wider range of contexts is called, "Creating Inspiration: Using the visual and performing arts to promote environmental sustainability," published by the Australian Government in 2007. It provides an overview of a variety of artworks and their relationship to policy. Part of the extensive "Creating Inspiration" study examines Rolf Groven's paintings, but it also analyzes community arts practices or participatory forms of art, which this thesis can only mention. The study delineated three pathways to environmental sustainability via the arts. They include *communicating information*, which affects beliefs, as well as *connecting us to the environment* and *catalyzing ecologically sustainable development*, which affect values (Curtis et al. 2007:4).

Statistically, Norway compares quite well to other countries when it comes to promoting sustainability. Almost all of the country's electricity originates from hydroelectric energy. Norwegian companies and the government are highly engaged in Clean Development Mechanism projects around the world (Informant 25, 20.01.2010 and Informant 26, 28.01.2010). As an oil-producing nation, Norway has an arguably greater responsibility to the planet for helping to mitigate the effects of global warming, linked to the burning of fossil fuels.

Rolf Groven was one of the first Norwegian artists to articulate the critical sentiments shared by many citizens even in the earliest stages of the Norwegian "oil adventure." In many ways, his message is still relevant today. With the

discovery of the connection between oil and climate change and the occurrence of oil-related catastrophes in recent history (the Deepwater Horizon spill), there are more reasons than ever for the Norwegian state to be careful and responsible in creating environmental policies, especially those directly involving the oil industry.

Groven's art uses several visual techniques to convey a rhetorical message. His satirical style resembles political cartooning, although the paintings are not usually painted on commission for a newspaper or periodical. In most cases, Groven independently chooses what to paint. Sometimes newspapers or history books reprint his works later to illustrate a political issue. The form of visual rhetoric employed in Groven's paintings can be compared to advertising or propaganda. Later in this thesis, I will elaborate on the ways visual arts are used to influence the values and beliefs of an audience and political policy.

Groven's artwork resides in an immutable art historical/political context. *Oljemaleri* is also cemented in a temporal sense, referring specifically to the past and present, as of 1975. The future relevance of the painting is left up to fate, as Groven cannot revise his painting. The political context surrounding the artwork changes, and that can influence the audience's interpretation of his message. However, due to his chosen art practice - figurative painting - the message itself remains permanent. Groven's art does not engage the audience as *participants* in a collaborative thinking and learning experience like some contemporary artworks do. This thesis will discuss several examples of such collaborative art projects within the Eco-Art field.

It is also important to note the historical give and take between art and politics. Since commissioned portraits of monarchs and their families, the state has had considerable influence over art vis a vis funding. Today, governments around the world have national endowments for the arts, which provide funding for the arts

out of tax revenue. Funding is usually allocated based on grant applications and project proposals. Criteria for selection is often based on the artist, group or project's contribution to politically motivated agendas like education, access and knowledge transfer.

In this sense, not much has changed over time about the structure for the state to influence art: financial support encourages artists to portray the state in a favorable light, not "biting the hand that feeds them," so to speak. Rolf Groven has generally had bad luck with receiving stipends and support from the state, and few have commissioned works from him. He has sold some paintings after they were finished, however, and sometimes to unexpected buyers. This thesis will assess potential influence in the opposite direction - from the arts to government policies on the environment.

In the research journal *Environment and Behavior*, Julie Ann Pooley and Moira O'Connor suggest that to change peoples' attitudes (and behaviors) not only rational knowledge, but also emotions and beliefs, must be targeted (Pooley 2000:711). Rolf Groven's politically charged satirical paintings apply to this study of how art influences policy because they elicit an emotional response and cause the viewer to question his or her beliefs about the imagery presented. Groven uses visual rhetorical techniques to appeal to what several interview subjects identified as Norwegian values concerning the environment. At the same time, he communicates exaggerated information, showing an extreme vision of what could become of the Norwegian landscape if sustainable environmental policies are not implemented.

Extensive research has been done on the significance of literature in an ecological context², while the visual arts have been largely neglected. Consider the common phrase "a picture speaks a thousand words." The impact of an image can be instantaneous. A research journal on Environmental Politics and the Visual Arts could appeal to a broad academic audience including art historians,

² Works by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, ASLE - the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, Lawrence Buell and Greg Garrard defined the field of "Ecocriticism" as dealing mostly with literature.

sociologists, environmental scientists, behavioral anthropologists and media specialists. With a broad base of appeal and heightened complexity due to the convergence of both visual and textual data, one might ask why there is not more current research on this subject.

Terminology

Throughout this thesis, I will use the term **political policy** referring to my own broad definition: a conscious plan of action adopted by a government or society based on shared experience, values, beliefs and ideals.

"One must [...] understand **political** in its deeper meaning, as describing the whole of human relations in their real, social structure, in their power of making the world (Barthes 1999:58)." Art is always political.

"**Ideology** is a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1999:317)."

Perhaps the most contentious term to define within this thesis is the meaning of **art**. The definition of art has been debated for centuries on the basis of aesthetic appeal and philosophical reasoning. Contemporary American Art Critic and Philosopher Arthur Danto claims, that "there is no special way works of art have to be (1998)." Since the beginning of conceptual art, especially Marcel Duchamp's invention of "ready-mades³," the definition of art has become more complex and subjective than ever before.

Art is not necessarily a particular creation of an individual human subjectivity, but can also be a collaborative or group effort. Since the broad question "what is art" is not one of the main topics of this thesis, I will simply suggest my own phrasing of a popular contemporary definition of art that will be used throughout.

³ "Ready-made" sculptures are works of art taken directly from a commodified, mass production, or every-day context and placed in a gallery without alteration by the artist.

Art: any human creation or activity done with the intention of creating art. This can include, but is not limited to, pieces that engage any and all senses (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).

Taste here refers to "The fact or condition of liking or preferring something; inclination, liking for; appreciation. (OED Online November 2010)" I refer to a personal sense of taste, which is based on a subjective sense of aesthetic appeal. Barring lengthy semiotic discussions over who decides what is in "good taste" or what is "beautiful," I will rather suggest that each individual develops likes and dislikes based on several background factors.

Subjectivity refers to the subject and his or her perspective, feelings, beliefs and desires. (Solomon 2005:900.)

"All experience is subjective." - Gregory Bateson

Rhetoric is one of the three ancient arts of discourse and refers to the art of using language to communicate persuasively (OED Online November 2010).

Visual rhetoric is a relatively new field of research pioneered by Roland Barthes in his essay "The Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text* in 1977. It works to apply the classical concepts of rhetoric to visual communication. Visual rhetorical analysis investigates all persuasive techniques used in images.

The term **paradox** is used to refer to any situation of an inherently, or apparently, contradictory nature. **Double bind** is a term coined by Gregory Bateson, which describes a situation where an individual or group, known as the "victim(s)" is fed conflicting messages in an effort to cause confusion and emotional turmoil. The messages communicate to the victim that no matter what s/he does, s/he cannot win - a "catch-22" (Bateson 1972:201).

Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* has been described by some as propaganda (Informant 39, 27.11.2010). **Propaganda** is "the systematic dissemination of information,

especially in a biased or misleading way, in order to promote a political cause or point of view (OED Online November 2010)." One chapter in this thesis will investigate the difference between propaganda and rhetorical art, and the ways in which both seek to influence the audience.

Within a rhetorical context, **mimesis** refers to an imitation or reproduction of the supposed words of another in order to represent his or her character, as performed by Plato in the Socratic dialogues. In a broader context, **mimesis** can refer to any kind of mimicry, or imitative representation. Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* incorporates elements taken directly from the original painting *Brudeferden i Hardanger*. This visual **homology** conjures the conceptual significance of the original in the audience's minds. It also exaggerates the contrast of other elements in Groven's painting, which were not in the original.

Parody, satirical or ironic, is defined by Simon Dentith as "polemical imitation, often in a humorous way (2000:9)."

Another semantic question requires me to establish a definition for "environment," distinguishing it from "landscape" and from "nature." As Tim Ingold reminds us, the terms are not synonymous. **Environment** refers to the area around us, which humans perceive as full of **use-values**, Marx's term for the value of a consumable object (Ingold 1992:44). Whereas **nature** is defined based on an imagined separation between humans and the rest of the world (Ingold Oct. 1993:154).

"A **landscape** is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988:1)."

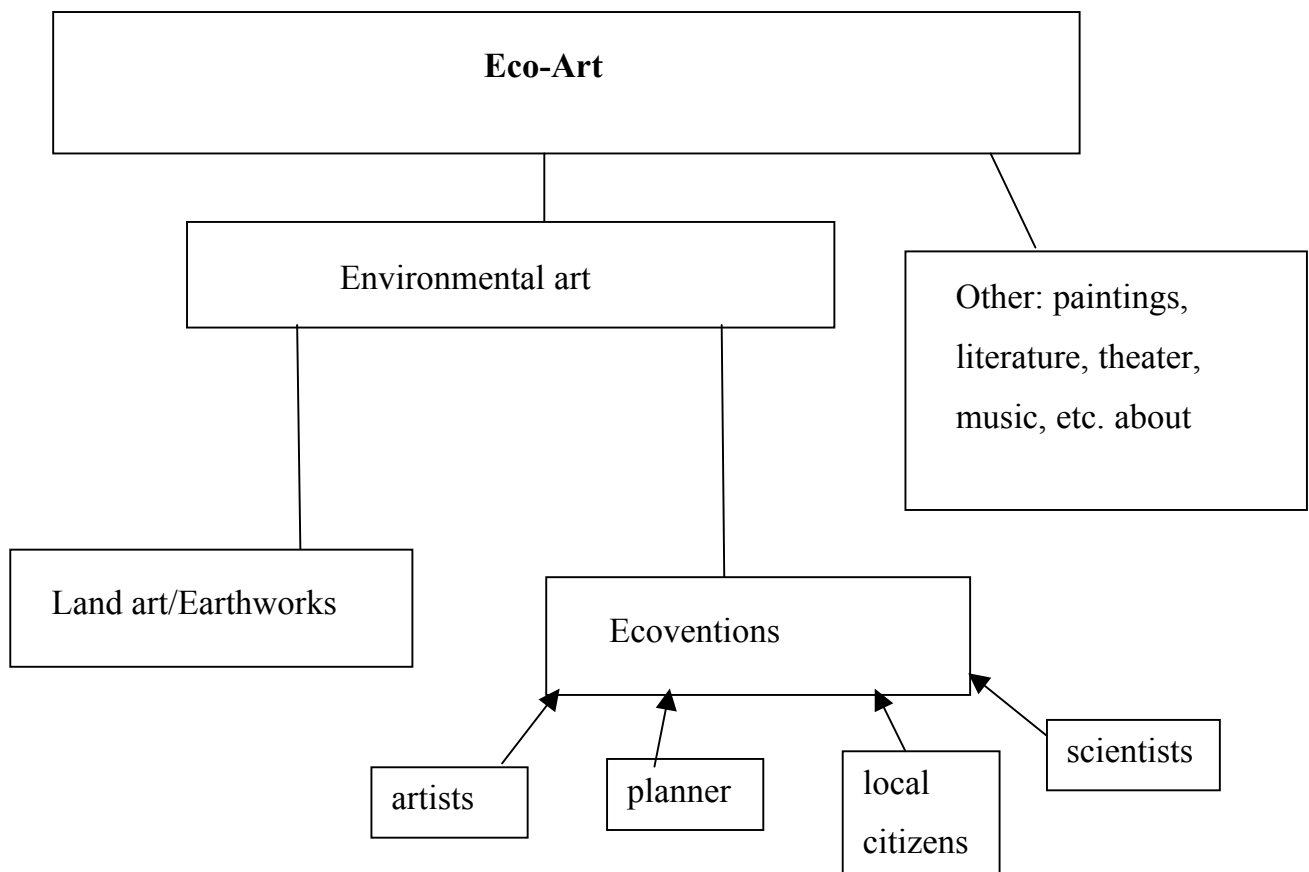
According to art historian Susan Spaid, **Eco-Art** is an umbrella term covering all forms of activist art, which deal with ecological issues (2003:2).

Environmental art employs nature or is physically situated in nature somehow (Spaid: email 21.03.2011). **Land art** and **Earthworks** are generally synonymous

terms and refer to art made out of, or with, parts of the landscape as the medium.

Ecoventions are (often interdisciplinary) artist-initiated projects that employ an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology (Spaid 2002).

Ecoventions incorporate efforts by several specialists and members of a local community to improve an ecological aspect of a place (Spaid 2002).



Art and Policy

"Artists should be at the centre of society keeping alive a utopian vision, because society will not improve if the people envisioning a better society are politicians."

- Peter Sellars

In the case of *Oljemaleri*, as John Berger says in his essay *Ways of Seeing*, "the painting is silent." The work of art is not actually doing anything but being. Yet, it transmits a persuasive political message from the artist to the viewer.

"An underlying theme of these artists is that the personal is the political. Showing their reaction to life on a polluted planet, many artists exhibit a particular concern with systems and the place of humans within those systems (de Groat 1994:1)."

As a product of human creation, art is always political. Whether intentionally or not, the creator conveys something about his or her values or beliefs in the piece. S/he chooses what to create, how to create it, where to show it and to whom. Art is an expression of an artist's own policy if it conveys his/her values and beliefs.

This thesis specifically focuses on how art can influence political policy on environmental issues. Art can educate the audience about an environmental issue, changing their beliefs about a subject. Art also seeks to influence values over a much longer period of time. Long-term community engagement programs or repeatedly exposing young people to meaningful artworks will, theoretically, influence the values of future generations (Pooley 2000; Curtis et al. 2007).

From experience to influence

The perception of art is based in the subjective experience of an audience member. As the data I collected during my fieldwork will show, the subjective interpretations of a work of art can vary widely. Even in a work of art with an ostensibly clear message (like *Oljemaleri*) a viewer's preexisting values and beliefs can influence his/her perception of the work. For instance, while the majority of respondents to a multiple choice questionnaire about *Oljemaleri* associated the "rusty sinking oil drum" in the foreground with "pollution," three Norwegians and three foreign respondents associated it with "profit." In an open-ended questionnaire, more Norwegians associated this signifier with the "oil industry" than with pollution. The wide variation between these three responses shows the variety of interpretations elicited by the painting. Yet, the main topic still translates into wider, politically charged signified terms.

Context is all-important and, as Marshall McLuhan said, "the medium is the message (McLuhan 1964)." The subjective perception of an art piece depends on not only what is presented, but also how it is presented, where one experiences the piece, with whom, when (time of day, week, month, year), what other media has been consumed, a knowledge of current events, the amount of time the viewer has to absorb or think about the piece, and certainly personal taste. Context can include both the environmental context (what is around the viewer) and the physiological context (what mood the viewer is in, for example). Later in the thesis, I will go on to examine existing research about visual rhetoric and how propaganda and advertising influences people.

Eco-Artists often use the principles of visual rhetoric to persuade their audience to care more about the environment and to affect political policy. With an increase of scientific data proving the dangers and complications of climate change, more and more artists have started using their medium of choice to inspire change.

Artists can often work directly with political Green parties to promote environmentally friendly platforms⁴. Communication between artists and voters can contribute to an important step in the democratic process toward policy change: establishing shared values and beliefs.

Rolf Groven's art intends to convey a rhetorical message about a particular ecological problem. Intentionally using certain methods, like contrast between seemingly dissimilar visual signifiers ("contrast starts people thinking" {Groven: interview 19.09.2010}), Groven seeks to influence the opinions of his viewers. Rhetorical art and propaganda focus on eliciting an emotional or opinion-based shift in the audience. Arousal of emotions can incite ideological reflection within audience members.

Groven's paintings construct a kind of reverse advertising - showing what should be avoided rather than coveted. Advertising is often a more direct, easier to absorb form of art. It is a product of creative teams, informed by market research, working toward the unified purpose of selling something. The aim of advertising is similar to that of propaganda - it seeks to convince people to do something. In the case of *Oljemaleri*, the painting is not created with the sole intention of making a profit, but rather to convey Groven's strong attitude that Norway's true wealth is in the country's natural beauty, not in its oil reserves⁵.

From influence to policy

Policies can be determined by individuals, but also by groups - businesses, governments, organizations, clubs, lobbies or any other cluster of human beings within society. In the case of political policy in a democratic-republic state like

⁴ Conceptual artist Joseph Beuys helped form the Green party in Germany (Tate 2005).

⁵ "That's our richness: the nature. That's my propaganda. We are rich, not only because of the oil, but the nature (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

Norway⁶, decisions are made on different legislative levels - either by the country's parliament or smaller municipal governments for different "kommune"s.

During an interview, a member of the Norwegian Parliament explained that there are two ways political policy on the environment can be implemented: either with the carrot or the whip ("gulrot" and "pisk;" also the carrot and the stick, "stokk") (Informant 22, 26.11.2009). In other words, laws are enforced either with incentives or coercion. Once a law is put into effect, people who cooperate with the law can be rewarded with tax breaks or other incentives (the carrot). One example is the pant system for returning recyclable plastic bottles to a designated area. The incentive in this case is that if the consumer returns the bottle, s/he gets the extra money s/he spent for the product back. Taxes can be levied to penalize people or businesses that do not cooperate with an environmental law. One example of coercion (or the whip) is the CO₂ tax that was adopted in Norway in 1991, which taxed roughly 60 percent of CO₂ emissions in the country (Hovden 2002:147).

More recently, carbon-trading systems have introduced a combination of the whip and the carrot methods through market incentives. Businesses that emit less CO₂ can profit by selling carbon credits, and businesses that emit more CO₂ must buy credits. Government incentives ("carrots") or coercion ("whips") are examples of top-down influence. Still, companies and people can be stubborn in their ways, much like donkeys. Political bodies take on the responsibility of shifting the behaviors of an obstinate populace.

The focus of this thesis is the influence of art on the *people* rather than Parliamentary representatives. While government officials have direct influence over political policy on the environment, the fact that their terms in office are temporary makes them cautious with their vote. The hope for reelection is

⁶ Technically the Kingdom of Norway could still be considered a monarchy, but since the King exercises no political power over parliament, I will investigate the power of art over the *people*, not the King.

constantly in the minds of successful politicians, thus they must act in accordance with the values and beliefs of the people they represent. I am interested in how art can influence the peoples' values and beliefs, which theoretically dictate a government official's decisions.

Norwegian ecosophy and environmental politics

"Norway is in a kind of moral conflict with itself when it comes to environmental demands and economic demands (Informant 25, 20.01.2010)."

As a modern post-industrial society, and a particularly affluent one, Norway has the responsibility to make ethical decisions when it comes to ecological problems. Norway can be seen as "a nascent subjectivity: a constantly mutating socius and environment in the process of being reinvented (Guattari 2989:68)." The changing global landscape (both natural and social) demands adaptability and a response from Norway as a nation and a people. The long-discussed issues of pollution and resource depletion still plague our planet, but so does a more recently discovered threat: climate change due to human activity.

There is a strong eco-philosophical emphasis on human technological advancements to save the environment. Norwegian companies, including the national oil company, Statoil, have invested heavily in Carbon Capture and Storage research (Statoil 2007). Clean Development Mechanism projects, in accordance with Norway's Kyoto Protocol commitment, have spread technological innovation toward clean energy throughout several areas in the developing world (Informant 26, 28.02.2010).

Arne Næss, the author of *The Shallow and the Deep*, warned against centralization of influence far away from local communities⁷. With Norway's

⁷ Notably, Rolf Groven also warns against centralization: "I believe in small unities," referring to his disapproval of the proposal that Norway should join the European Union (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)

increased involvement in international government and their markedly high levels of foreign aid investments, one must wonder whether Næss would disapprove of Norway's current political status. Næss was glad to see that Norway never became a part of the European Union. Even with high subsidies for Norwegian farmers, the country still must import most of its food from other countries. Norway is among the richest countries in the world largely thanks to its oil exports to other countries (Ekman 18. 11. 2005). On the other hand, the country is 99 percent self-sufficient when it comes to renewable power - generated by extensive hydroelectric systems all over the country (*Economist* 11.01.2009).

Despite Arne Næss's promotion of small local government and autonomy, Norway has become a major player in the international movement toward sustainability. With Gro Harlem Brundtland's connection to *Our Common Future* (aka: *The Brundtland Report*), Norway has been instrumental in the international movement towards sustainability since 1987. Hovden and Lindseth comment on the shift from national CO₂ controls to an emphasis on climate change as an *international* problem (2002:146). The prevailing policy in Norway and throughout the capitalized western world has been to use technology and creativity to "reinvent" the environment, as Felix Guattari puts it.

From the creation of an artwork, to the experience of this artwork by an audience, complex subjective factors come into play to determine how the artwork may influence the values and beliefs of the audience. In turn, the peoples' values and beliefs influence political policy in an ideal democratic-republic state. In Norway, a complex relationship with nature and ecology influences and complicates the audience's experience of Eco-Art like *Oljemaleri*.

Historical Background for *Oljemaleri*

Rolf Groven's painting, which this thesis investigates as a case study, is entitled "Oljemaleri," meaning literally "oil painting." The title is a pun, as it describes both the actual art medium used to create the painting and the subject matter. The painting depicts symbols of the oil industry and spilled oil polluting the landscape. Groven's playful use of language in the title is one of several factors that make this work of art postmodern. An in-depth description of *Oljemaleri* can be found in the chapter "Visually Reading Oljemaleri," beginning on page 59.

Rolf Groven's artistic practice lies within a historically complex field, one that has been particularly problematized in contemporary art - figurative painting⁸. Groven's works are large-scale, full color and are meticulously painted over the course of several days or weeks. In his essay "Last Exit: Painting," Thomas Lawson examines the nature of painting, saying "[painting] is a conflict between a certain logical, even doctrinaire, purity and the impurity of real life (1981:161)." The late 20th Century Stuckist movement exemplifies one of the few movements supporting figurative art as a means of political expression. Protestors associated with the Stuckist movement refute modernism in favor of a "new figurative painting with ideas as the most vital artistic means of addressing contemporary issues (Guru 2004:1)."

National Romanticism

"... the spectre of Romanticism which haunts Norway is, like most nineteenth century spectres, a very problematic, protean being, which requires closer inspection, if not ghostbusting."

- Nina Witoszek 2010:3

⁸ "Figurative" refers to painting that is not abstract.

The subtitle of *Oljemaleri*, "Fritt etter Tidemand og Gude"⁹, refers to the famous Romantic painting *Brudeferden i Hardanger* (1848), "the bridal journey in Hardanger fjord." *Brudeferden* was the product of the collaboration of two celebrated 19th Century Norwegian artists - Adolph Tidemand and Hans Gude. Hans Gude was a landscape painter educated in the Düsseldorf School. German Romanticism had a distinct influence on Norwegian landscape painting in the 19th Century (Danbolt 2009). Adolph Tidemand was a portrait painter and an expert on Norwegian traditions.

By the time Tidemand and Gude came together to work on *Brudeferden*, both artists had grown famous in Norway. Having national celebrities who represented the movement for independence signified a growing legitimacy for Norway as its own nation, not a province of Sweden or Denmark. As Rolf Groven and his partner Anne Karine Thorsrud agreed in an interview, the partnership of these two artists was "*super* Norwegian (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)." "Super nationalistic, yes (Thorsrud: interview 19.09.2010)."

⁹ My translation: "based on Tidemand and Gude"



Fig. 2 *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, 1848 by Adolph Tidemand and Hans Gude

Brudeferden i Hardanger was the first of five collaborations between Adolf Tidemand and Hans Gude (Sørbø 1995). The original *Brudeferden* painting, which now hangs in the National Gallery in Oslo, was exhibited, to much critical acclaim, in Düsseldorf in 1848 (Berg 1993:263). The Art Association of Christiania immediately commissioned another, larger version to serve as a backdrop for a theatrical production based on the painting (Sørbø 1995). A boat with costumed players stood on the stage in front of the painted backdrop.

The symbolic resonance of Tidemand and Gude's painting continued through the end of the 19th and 20th centuries, with references in the visual arts, theater, music and film. In 1887, Theodor Kittelsen drew a parody of the painting, showing the bridal party close up - a drunken, disorderly rabble. The *Bridal Party in Hardanger* was made into a silent film in 1926 by Rasmus Breistein¹⁰. The place itself has also received special attention in certain political

¹⁰ IMDB. (2011): "Brudeferden i Hardanger (1926)." The Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0016691/>. Retrieved 25 April 2011.

controversies such as the recent political debate about building power masts in that region.



Fig. 3 *Brudeferden*, 1887 by Theodor Kittelsen

Despite being Norwegian, Hans Gude was educated in Germany and ascribed to the Romantic painting tradition that was forming there. To the Romantics in Europe, nature was imbued with divine meaning (Witoszek, 2010:7). Nature was depicted as vast, powerful and overwhelmingly beautiful. The term "sublime" is often used in describing the Romantic representation of nature. The sky, mountains, forests and seas are rendered with passionate detail, but not always with photo-realistic qualities. Romantic painters did not often paint scenes directly from life. They would rather make several sketches in a location and compile them in the studio into a drawing that they felt conveyed the essence of the landscape more than any one real vantage point could express (Kleiner 2008:789).

When present, humans tended to be small in Romantic landscape painting. A perfect example is J.C. Dahl's *Fra Stalheim* {1842}, part of the permanent exhibition at the National Gallery in Oslo. The people and their creations (buildings, bridges, boats) were integrated into the overpowering, beautiful

landscape. One senses the vulnerability of humanity's smallness in the immense, powerful grip of Nature. *Outbreak of the Vesuvius* (1826), by J.C. Dahl, is a perfect example of this: depicting two tiny human figures silhouetted before the colossal flames and smoke pouring down the mountainside into the valley below. Gude's *Vestlandsfjord* (1862) is part of the National Gallery's permanent Romantic landscape collection and further illustrates this point. It shows a ship anchored in an inlet as ominous dark storm clouds gather on the horizon out at sea. The boatmen, tiny in comparison to the scale of the sky and waves, paddle to shore in a rowboat, returning just in time before the treacherous storm breaks.

The painterly articulation of this sense of smallness, of vulnerability to the whims of Nature, came at a time when humanity was experiencing a major change - the Industrial Revolution (Kleiner 2008:785). Throughout history, humanity's timeless struggle for survival pitted us in a battle against Earth. The Neolithic Revolution, the Bronze Age, the Iron age, etc were previous waves of technological advancements that allowed humans to cope better with nature's unpredictability. Nevertheless, the human population still fluctuated due to climate or weather changes, plagues, and other natural catastrophes. The Industrial Revolution uncovered new energy sources, modes of transportation and more efficient methods of production. All of these advancements contributed to a decreased dependence on capricious Nature and increased self-sufficiency.

By the mid-19th Century, the landscape in Europe had already begun to change due to these technological advancements. The Romantic painters at this time were nostalgic for the wild, untamed nature that their ancestors knew.

Tidemand and Gude used nostalgia as one of the conceptual techniques in their *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, not only by portraying the raw, untouched nature, but also in the characters on the bridal journey through the fjord. Adolph Tidemand was an expert at painting traditional Norwegian costumes and customs. He depicts the bridal party paddling away from an old stave church in the background. The bride, in her elaborate bunad (traditional national costume)

and bridal crown, looks as though she could have been plucked out of a Norwegian folktale.

At a time when Norway was separating from their centuries-long political ties with Denmark and Sweden, this painting helped to define what was Norwegian. The period when *Brudeferden* was painted has come to be known as the "National Romantic" period. "...That was part of nation-building and national identity," said Marit Bakke, Historian and Norwegian cultural expert, in an interview on 13 February 2009. "They were depicting farmers, but also nature, as part of this national identity. So nature became an important element as part of what it is to be Norwegian. And [there was] also the connection between people and nature (Bakke: interview 13.02.2010)."

In the mid- to late-1800s, the British upper class started coming to Norway for leisure vacations, hiking in the mountains and fishing for salmon (Bakke: interview 13.02.2010). At that time, Norwegians hiked less for pure enjoyment and more out of necessity (ibid). "So in a way it was the British that [...] started mountain climbing and going in the mountains [purely for recreation]. And eventually it became Norwegians also (ibid)."

Since the 1970s when *Oljemaleri* was painted, the use of nature for leisure activities has increased. Before the discovery of oil in the North Sea, Norway was a poorer country and time spent outdoors was more often associated with work: farming or fishing. Now, many Norwegians use their leisure time to go for hikes, berry-picking, skiing or camping (Informant 34, 01.05.2010; Bakke: interview 13.02.2010; Informants 9, 10 and 11, 01.10.2009). These activities are frequently associated with pride of the national landscape (Informant 26, 28.01.2010). The change of nature's use values, from work to play, influences Norwegian environmental policy.

Environmental policies can stem from ecosophy: the philosophy of how we live with and in the environment. This articulates a theoretical base for plans of action - policies. With the threat of climate change, the continued burning of

fossil fuels threatens to sabotage the national landscape with changes in flora/fauna and eventually rising sea levels (IPCC 2007). Norway's oil industry produces fossil fuels. This poses an eco-philosophical dilemma to the Norwegian state.

Ecosophy can also influence art and peoples' beliefs or values. In the case of *Oljemaleri*, propaganda or rhetorical art is a medium for communicating an ecosophy. National Romantic paintings also proved a vehicle for inspiring and reaffirming an ecosophy revering untouched nature and conservation. Visual art is a vehicle for philosophy: a communication of ideas, ideals and values from an artist to the viewer.

Methodology

This chapter serves to describe the method design for this case study and to explain how the different methods function to support the main argument. First, I will introduce the various methods I employed in this project. Next, I will note some ethical considerations. Finally, I will describe each of the methods in detail, including their challenges.

This thesis aims to discuss how art can influence individuals' perceptions of political environmental policy. The methodology deals with qualitative data because the focus is to explore the interaction between individuals (artists and audiences) and impersonal social structures (government) (Brockington 2008:57). Art with a political-environmental message, including Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri*, often seeks to elicit an emotional response in the viewer. Art does not always operate on a logical level, which makes identifying the process of its influence over people and political policy challenging.

The focus on *Oljemaleri* represents a case study within the topic of how art influences political policy on the environment. Since this thesis concerns itself with "how?" and "why?" questions and current events, but does not require control of behaviors, a case study is appropriate (Yin 2003:5). Within the case study method design, I have selected to employ a survey technique for obtaining data. In this sense, the thesis does deal with some quantitative questions of "how much" or "how many (Ibid)." Skeptics of the case study method suggest that there is more possibility for bias or equivocal evidence than in, say, an experimental study (Ibid:10). This is probably true. However, the subjective nature of art's influence defies even more controlled empirical studies. Furthermore, the wide variety of art forms and projects, which influence political policy on the environment (and my the limited time period of one year), required that the focus of this thesis be narrowed down.

Throughout the method design, I attempted to account for the individual subjectivities of the audience in viewing *Oljemaleri* by using varied methodological techniques. Through conducting individual interviews, I aimed at compiling a body of subjective qualitative data dealing with environmental policy in Norway. I also gathered data about how different people interpreted the symbols in the politically charged painting *Oljemaleri*. Merging data collected over a period of one and a half years, I hope to show the emotional, subjective ways in which art can influence the values and beliefs of people.

I employed a mixed method design including the following approaches: open-ended interviews, participant observation, three types of printed surveys and literature analysis (Maxwell 2002). Each method came with its own set of advantages and challenges. A list of all interview informants, their age range, the date of our interview and their professions can be found in Appendix 1. Appendix 3 shows graphs representing multiple choice questionnaire responses. Appendix 4 diagrammatically illustrates semi-guided and open-ended questionnaire responses. Finally, in Appendix 5, the reader can find transcriptions of all short answer responses from the questionnaires about *Oljemaleri*.

Data collection was interwoven with analysis in an attempt to maintain a grounded relationship with the information first supplied by research informants (Neuman 1997). The continual analysis alongside the data collection allowed me to explore various pertinent directions while keeping my hypothesis open and workable. As I learned more about Norwegian political policies on environmental issues through the interviews, I realized how important nature preservation is as a national value (Informant 42, 13.12.2010). This led to more investigations about how these national values may have been formed and communicated to the people.

I must acknowledge my own subjectivity and cultural background as a part of this methodology. I employ a phenomenological approach by emphasizing the subjectivity of participants' responses within the context of

interaction with me as a researcher (Brockington 2008:68). Informants' moods, perceptions of me, the environment where we conducted the interview and countless other variables could have influenced responses.

The breadth of influences that play into the semiotic structure in *Oljemaleri* and the complex history behind the original, *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, also created challenges. The *Brudeferden* image is very significant to Norwegian cultural heritage and thus there is an overwhelming amount of literature about it. *Oljemaleri*, like most of Groven's paintings, deals with several political themes at once: the environmental dangers of the oil industry, unceasing development, capitalism, changes in the livelihood of the Norwegian worker, waste accumulation, wealth accumulation, advertising, and value shift. Taste values ("it's a bit too sentimental for me {Informant 40, 27.11.2010}") and pre-existing values and beliefs were not systematically analyzed.

I chose not to employ a discussion group method for studying the audience's interpretations of *Oljemaleri*. The initial pilot study and open-ended response sections on the survey sheets did give a venue for open discussion. However, I was interested in identifying the subjective interpretations of individuals when they look at *Oljemaleri*. I wanted to isolate that initial solitary instance of looking and test the individuals' responses. Would there be a wide range of responses? Or would most participants interpret the painting the same way I did? Does *Oljemaleri* reinforce the opinions of individual viewers by causing them to reflect and question (Guattari 1989)?

Diversification of method allowed me to explore my research questions from many angles. Employing a range of techniques also established a spectrum of subjectivity, ranging from very personal to impersonal. The open-ended interviews generally resulted in the most subjective data. Interview subjects were asked to share some of their political views. The longer period of interaction time afforded by the open-ended interviews gave over to more dialogue between the subject and myself as a researcher, allowing me to learn more about the subject's

personal opinions and about their field of interest. The surveys were less personal, depending on how much guidance was provided in each question.

Ethics

With the exception of Rolf Groven, Marit Bakke and Erik Solheim who agreed for their names and words to be used in this thesis, I have kept the identities of other informants anonymous. The demographic data about each informant (particularly their occupation, nationality and age) may be relevant in this analysis. Their specific identity and name, however, are not as relevant. I obtained informed consent from every interview informant to use excerpts from their interview and their photographic portrait in a book. I introduced myself as a researcher with funding from the US State Department's Fulbright program, provided a comprehensive statement (via email and/or verbally) of the interview project I was conducting, and explained how the data they provided would be used (Scheyvens 2003:143). At the time I obtained informed consent from most of the informants (August 2009 - May 2010), I did not know that I would be using the interviews for this particular thesis. I determined that the names of the informants are not particularly relevant (with the exception of the three individuals listed above), thus I provide only the date of the interview and some demographic data. I have provided demographic information about each individual, but will not mention his or her name.

The questionnaires distributed at the National Gallery had a section at the top for respondents to fill out information about themselves. This included name, age, profession, email address and whether or not I could contact them again for further questioning. Several people who responded to the questionnaires did not provide their name, meaning they preferred to remain anonymous (Scheyvens 2003:146). Others filled out all of the requested information. Once again, I did not deem it relevant to write respondents' names in this thesis, so they will be referred to by number or in unspecific terms later in the analysis section.

Open-Ended Interviews

The first step in collecting data for this thesis was to conduct 43 open-ended interviews with Norwegians from a broad sociological spectrum. I stratified my sampling by learning a bit about candidates - their age range, sex, and occupation - before asking to speak with them (Lusthaus 1999:4). The interviews were collected during a period from August 2009 to January 2011. By getting involved with different cultural activities, through social networks and by going up to people at random and introducing myself, I managed to obtain a fairly diverse set of informants. A 'snowball sampling' approach often came into play: when interviewing one informant, he/she would refer me to another member of his/her social network (Neumann 1997:207).

These interviews spanned a broad range of topics, all related to sustainable development, environmental policy or Norwegian nature traditions in some way. They helped to form a basis of understanding about contemporary Norwegian perspectives on the environment. Within this analysis they make up a base-line thread that I can continually refer back to. While all of the informants have diverse individual subjectivities, some common threads reveal themselves. For example, most informants felt that the Norwegian state does a better job promoting sustainability abroad than it does domestically. Many informants expressed similar concerns about over consumption and the oil industry that Rolf Groven expressed in his painting *Oljemaleri* 35 years before.

The interview with Rolf Groven proved to be a particularly important source of information. I devised a list of questions asking about everything from his methods to his views on environmental policy to his account of the public's reaction to his work. We talked for over four hours at his home in Oslo. The walls were covered with large murals he painted. Works that I quickly recognized had been featured in news articles over the years cover his apartment from floor-to-ceiling. The conversation played out naturally with Groven, who smiles and laughs easily. His calm and thoughtful partner, Anne-Karine, helped with some interpreting.

Challenges

It was challenging to identify and deeply investigate one particular thread of interest, since participants were so varied. There were a few key questions that I tried to ask everyone. Then, if an individual was a stakeholder in one specific environmental issue, we spent most of the interview discussing that. This was beneficial to me as a researcher because I had an opportunity to learn about a variety of environmental topics from experts in the field.

It was difficult to ask the same questions to each informant without allowing the responses of previous informants to infiltrate the phrasing. On one hand, "experiential data" from previous interviews helped me ask more specific questions (Strauss 1987). On the other hand, bias from experiential data could have come across as leading the informant. Here is one question from an interview transcript where I may have based a question off of a pre-conceived notion. Informant 36, an oil industry engineer, sat across from me at a children's play table in the Norwegian Petroleum Museum in Stavanger when I asked him this question:

"I've heard some Norwegians say that going 'på tur' is something that's actually not supposed to be enjoyable. When you're walking it's [...] supposed to be strenuous, and when you finally get to your destination, you have [...] your matpakke. How does that influence the way you feel about nature, as opposed to if you were just going out and wandering around and not really going with purpose in such a way?"

It may have been better to simply ask two questions: "Do you feel going 'på tur' is supposed to be something relaxing or a strenuous activity?" Then, regardless of their answer, I could ask "How do you feel that influences the way you experience nature and the way you feel about nature?" Asking questions about the utilitarian use of nature also implies an anthropocentric separation from nature.

Another example of a question where a experiential data appeared in my phrasing of a question occurred when I was interviewing a Deputy Minister of the Environment at the COP15 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on January 29, 2010:

"Speaking of [Research and Development] R&D, what is the percentage of monetary and intellectual allocations that Norway is investing in renewables compared to [Carbon Capture and Storage] CCS and their oil exploitations? Several people I have talked to argue that a disproportionate number of people and funds are going to exploiting the oil and not into renewables."

Since she was a politician, I expected that she would be familiar with the various sides of the issue. However, it would have been better to wait until she had responded to the initial statistical question. Then, as a separate question I could have asked for her reaction to the opinion statement beginning with "Several people...." As it happened, she focused on the first question, discussing new R&D projects based on collaborations between universities and businesses pooling intellectual and financial resources.

While transcribing the interviews, I found that I often asked compound questions. Usually the informant understood what I meant and their response was adequate. However, in retrospect, I believe I made a mistake in asking multi-layered questions. For example, I asked Informant 30, an administrator at the Norwegian Technical Museum a compound personal question:

"...how would you say you feel about Norwegian environmental policies in general? Are you satisfied with the way the government is dealing with environmental issues at home and abroad? Do you think there is a discrepancy in the way they deal with these issues here and internationally?"

These three questions are in the correct order but it may have been better to ask them separately.

Language was also sometimes an obstacle. Two interviews were conducted entirely in Norwegian, and I believe that my novice speaking skills lead my informants to oversimplify their responses. Another interview had to be

cut short because the participant did not feel comfortable responding, perhaps due to shyness or the language barrier. When speaking English with young people or individuals whose English skills did not seem strong, I avoided compound questions and used simpler vocabulary. This simplification or imprecise translations may affect the communication of complex ideas or informants' perceptions. For example, the term "friluftsliv" has no direct translation into English.

Despite the challenges, the open-ended interviews provided background information about Norway as well as specific facts, which I later researched to check their validity. The interviews also articulated complex, yet strong cultural ties with nature and the landscape among Norwegians. Informants' testimonies formed a baseline for specific analysis into how art influences political policy on the environment in Norway.

Questionnaires

In order to attain a better understanding of how Norwegians (and foreigners) read Groven's polemical work, I conducted a survey based on semiotic analysis of *Oljemaleri*. Participants were asked to look at *Oljemaleri* and its inspiration, *Brudeferden i Hardanger* side-by-side to analyze parts of the latter for symbolic significance. I made three versions of the questionnaire, one multiple choice, one semi-guided and one fully open-ended. Each type was tested on a pilot group of at least five participants to evaluate the translation and presentation. Some of the pilot responses were used in the final analysis, when the pilot survey was very similar to the final version of the survey. The pilot test was important to find out how the content of the questionnaire would be interpreted by the participants in the study (Maxwell 2005, 227).

I distributed the surveys at the National Gallery. At that time, I brought all three types (multiple choice, semi-guided and open-ended) with me. The English language version was only available in multiple choice and was distributed to non-Norwegians. I was particularly interested in obtaining in-depth responses from Norwegians. The assumption was that Norwegians would be more familiar with Norwegian history, culture and politics, and thus would be better equipped to provide rich, informed responses.

In total, I collected 50 responses at the National Gallery and 13 responses from the pilot study. 28 people in total responded to the multiple choice questionnaire and 35 people responded to the semi-guided questionnaire. There were 21 non-Norwegian (foreign) participants and 42 Norwegian participants. Since this is a small sample size relative to the total number of people in the world who have seen Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* painting, there is a rather large standard error (Overton 2008: 44). Since the study included 21 foreign participants, the sample was heterogeneous and thus, it should be considered that there would be an even higher standard error (ibid). The questionnaire sample size was limited by the time available and access to the desired context: the

National Gallery. I was able to collect 50 responses on one full day at the gallery. The study may have been improved if I had access to a larger sample. However, the highly subjective nature of the audience's relation to the work conflicts with a technocratic methodological approach.

The most revealing part of all three of the questionnaires is the short-answer questions at the end. There were two, the first of which asks an essential question: "Når du sammenligner "Oljemaleri" på Rolf Groven til Tidemand og Gude's "Brudeferden i Hardanger," hva tror du kunstneren Groven prøver å si om miljøpolitikk i Norge? Hvilken betydning har naturen for norsk kultur?" ("When you compare Rolf Groven's "Oljemaleri" to Tidemand and Gude's "Brudeferden i Hardanger," what do you believe the artist, Groven, is trying to say about environmental politics in Norway? What does nature mean for Norwegian culture?")

I recorded the approximate length of time each participant spent looking at the paintings, reading the questionnaire, and writing on the questionnaire using a stopwatch. The idea behind recording the time was that this data might give some hint about the participant's level of engagement with the piece. Every attempt was made to do this subtly, including writing notes in code, so that participants would not notice they were being observed in this way. If the participant became aware that they were being observed, they might behave differently - spend more time looking at the painting than they would instinctively, for instance.

Context

The 50 questionnaires were distributed at the top of the stairs at the National Gallery on October 23, 2010 from 11am to 4pm. It was a cool, cloudy Saturday. The front page of Aftenposten carried a story about shootings in Malmö, Sweden.

Frithjof Bringager, the Senior Curator for Education in the Department of Old Masters and Modern Art, arranged for high quality, full color prints of *Oljemaleri* and *Brudeferden i Hardanger* to be put on the museum board. He

provided two small wooden table easels for the two prints to sit on. He also brought two fine, heavy, glass-topped tables and four chairs to be brought up from the museum's restaurant storage space. His help optimized the contextual experience for questionnaire participants because the prints, easels and tables looked professional.

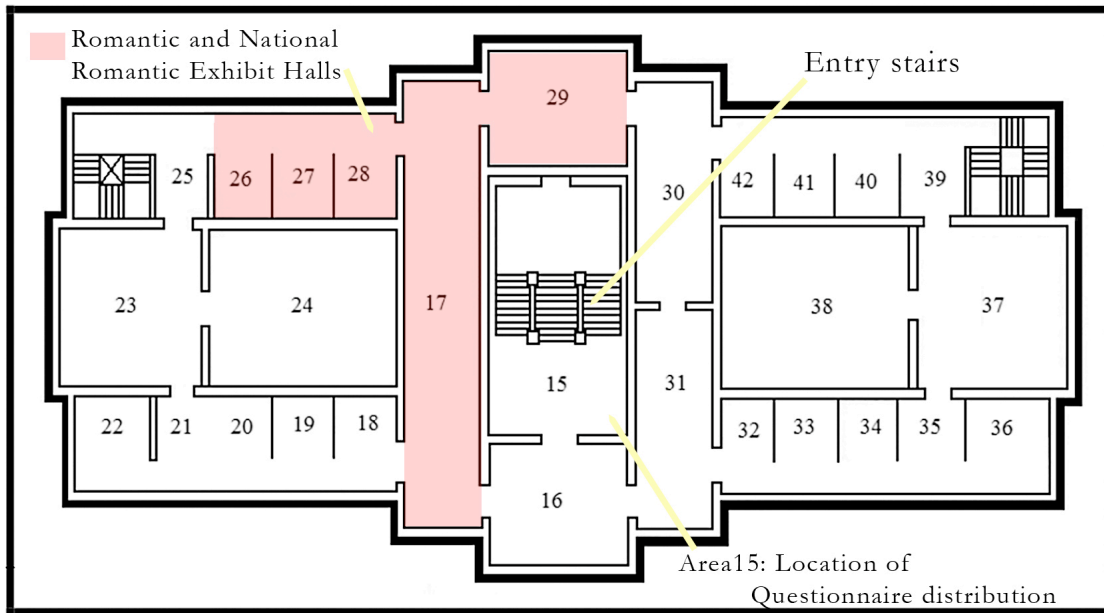


Fig. 4 Floor plan: Second floor of the National Gallery, Oslo (From National Gallery 2011, with modifications by Stephanie Haas 2011)

As patrons entered or exited the main gallery, I approached them and quietly asked in Norwegian if they would like to participate in a survey I was conducting for my Masters Thesis. I explained the thesis was dealing with Art and Environmental Politics.

Also, hanging from the front of the table were two prominent signs with explanatory messages in a bold font. See Appendix 2 to read the complete text that was on the signs. The text on the sign in Norwegian was colored black and the sign in English had gray text. I did this to emphasize the Norwegian text, hoping that would encourage more Norwegian participants. The signs also had the University of Oslo and the Center for Development and the Environment (SUM) logos on them in the bottom right corner.

Challenges

One main drawback of the questionnaire method is that it does not account for the meanings that come from looking at the entire picture as a whole. The short answer at the end of the questionnaires is meant to raise that question. However, since the question comes at the end, the participant has already been exposed to a list of objects in the painting dealing primarily with environmental destruction, thus their answer could be biased.

There has been little art historical analysis of *Oljemaleri* before. Thus, there was no external source for reading signifiers and their signified meanings within this piece. After I initially drafted the first questionnaire, I used a pilot study in lieu of discussion groups for obtaining the multiple choice signifiers and signified meanings.

Recording times for each respondent as s/he looked at the paintings and wrote on the questionnaire was quite difficult since several participants went back and forth between looking and writing as they answered. Also, at certain times there were up to eight different people filling out the survey at once around the table. Even with the help of one research assistant, it was virtually impossible for us to record accurate times for everyone.

An unexpected challenge with the questionnaire came with sampling. The open-ended interviews strategy gave me ample time to strategically choose participants and aim for a broad range of socio-economic demographics. However, I found the impromptu nature of handing out questionnaires at the National Gallery elicited far more responses from young people (ages 20-30) and more females. Often, a male and a female would approach the table where I was distributing surveys together, and the female would take one, not the male. When asked if he would like one too, at least three times the male answered "No," that he would prefer to let his partner answer for him.

Multiple Choice

To create the multiple-choice questionnaire, I made a list of all the **signifiers** (objects in the painting which, within the context, represent or mean something more than their literal description) (Barthes 1957). The signifiers were "large, rusty rake sinking in oil mud," "sinking fishing boat," "oil sludge/spill," "rusty, sinking oil drums," "Hardangerfjord," "oil tankers with company logos," "oil platform," "temporary construction barracks" and "dead duck."

Next, I made a list of several possible **signified meanings** that the signifiers could represent (Barthes 1957). These words were listed after the signifier along with an "Other" field where the participant could write in interpretations that were not given. The survey also includes the short answer question at the end. The instructions for the multiple choice questionnaire read as follows:

"Vennligst se nøye på bildene. Et er kanskje kjent av deg, 'Brudeferden i Hardanger' av Adolph Tidemand og Hans Gude i 1848. Det andre har tittelen 'Oljemaleri' av kunstneren Rolf Groven. Det ble malt i 1975 med oljemaling på lerret. Hvert objekt har en symbolsk betydning. Noen objekter i maleriet er listet nedenfor. Velg 1-3 tolkninger som du føler passer best med hvert objekt."¹¹

When I presented this multiple-choice version to Rolf Groven during an interview, he had several suggestions about the translation, and recommended that I also ask about the dead duck in the foreground and the absence of the church in the background. I added a short answer question about the church and added the duck as a signifier. This survey requires the least amount of time and effort for the participant.

¹¹ English translation: "Please look carefully at the pictures. One is perhaps familiar to you, 'Brudeferden i Hardanger' by Adolph Tidemand and Hans Gude in 1848. The other is titled 'Oljemaleri' by artist Rolf Groven. It was painted in 1975 with oil on canvas. Each object has a symbolic meaning. Some objects in the painting are listed below. Chose 1-3 options that you feel fit best with each object."

I created an online-version of the multiple-choice survey, with the intention of digitally distributing it to a large number of people. After some deliberation and discussions with my supervisor, I determined that the context in which the participant reads and responds to the questionnaire would be very important. Since the participants are asked to look at both paintings side-by-side, an online environment, with possible other stimuli on the screen or in the room around could distract the participant and skew the data.

In practice, this survey first served to provide some quantitative figures for the frequency of certain interpretations. More importantly, it served as a control for me to check my own subjectivity against that of the Norwegian participants who completed the semi-guided questionnaires. I used my own interpretations for each signifier and it was important to see what words Norwegians wrote into the "Other" field as signifieds that I had not included.

The third function of the multiple-choice questionnaire was that it could be distributed easily to non-Norwegian tourists visiting the National Gallery. I analyzed their responses as a sort of cross-cultural control against my own subjective interpretation of *Oljemaleri* as a foreigner from the United States.

Semi-guided Questionnaire

The semi-guided questionnaire contained a list all of the *signifiers* from the multiple choice questionnaire, but each was followed only by three blank lines, inviting the participant to write up to three signified meanings for each object. The instructions for the semi-guided questionnaire read as follows:

**"Vennligst se nøye på bildene. Et er kanskje kjent av deg,
'Brudeferden i Hardanger' av Adolph Tidemand og Hans Gude i
1848. Det andre har tittelen 'Oljemaleri,' av kunstneren Rolf Groven.
Det ble malt i 1975 med oljemaling på lerret. Hvert objekt har en**

symbolsk betydning. Vennligst skriv 1-3 betydninger som du føler passer best med hvert objekt."¹²

This proved to be more difficult and time consuming for the participants. It was also more difficult for me to decipher, as the responses were in Norwegian and written by hand. I found this to be much more difficult to translate than I expected and enlisted the help of a Norwegian teacher. Depending on the subjective experience or opinions of participants, responses varied widely.

Furthermore, the list of signified meanings became very long with less overlap between different response sheets. The exact word choice was important to me, so if the participant wrote catastrophe, I would also add that word to the list rather than choosing two similar words that were used more commonly like "destruction" and "tragedy." This made it difficult to analyze the responses statistically (ie: X percent of participants said that A signifier symbolized B). I avoided developing a complex algorithm to account for these related words, which would require deeper investigations into linguistics than I had time or resources for.

Open-ended Questionnaire

Finally, the open-ended questionnaire prompted the participants to freely choose five objects within the painting as signifiers. Then, the participant was instructed to list one to three interpretations for each signifier. This proved to be the most time consuming, and thus it was difficult to find participants. I expected the responses would be both richer and more varied than in the first two questionnaire types.

The open-ended questionnaire was the venue where participants could communicate their values and beliefs most authentically. However, it was very

¹² English translation: "Please look carefully at the pictures. One is perhaps familiar to you, 'Brudeferden i Hardanger' by Adolph Tidemand and Hans Gude in 1848. The other is titled 'Oljemaleri' by artist Rolf Groven. It was painted in 1975 with oil on canvas. Each object has a symbolic meaning. Please chose 1-3 meanings that you feel fit best with each object."

challenging to find participants who were willing to spend so much time looking at and writing about the painting. In fact, only one participant agreed to respond to this questionnaire format. Thus, I have joined the open-ended questionnaire data with the semi-guided questionnaire data.

Coding

Once the questionnaires were completed, I entered the responses into Microsoft Excel. The spreadsheet will help to analyze the frequency distribution of certain signified responses among participants (Overton 2008:45). I created a column corresponding to each participant. The column includes the participant's age, nationality, gender and the approximate amount of time they spent looking, reading and writing for the questionnaire. For the multiple-choice responses, the coding process was fairly easy. When coding the semi-guided and open-ended response sheets, I added a new row for each signified meaning participants associated with each object in the painting. In the end, I totaled up all of the signified words in order to determine which were the most common associations with each signifier.

Many participants chose to write their responses in fragments or whole sentences rather than just three words in association with each signifier. In these cases, I have included the direct translation of their responses in the Appendix 4 with their short answer responses. For the sake of continuity in the spreadsheet, I tried to summarize their statements down to three words or less and mark those words under their name.

Conclusion to Methodology

In sum, I employed a mixed method design within this case study to focus on qualitative interpretations of how Groven's *Oljemaleri* communicates a persuasive political message to inspire change. Although bias may have been more prevalent due to the non-experimental nature of this study, the individual

subjective reactions to the painting and Norwegian environmental policy will be communicated.

I hope that my "intervention" at the National Gallery exposed some people to Groven's painting who might not have seen it before. There were several responses expressing passionate feelings about environmental policy and the dangers of oil exploitation. Participants' strong responses evoked by the painting suggest that visual art can and does influence the audiences' emotions by emphasizing an ecological activist message.

Theoretical Analysis of Oljemaleri: Art is not always rational

I have set out to analyze the line of influence from politically active artist(s) to environmental policy, and attempt to examine this subject from several different angles. It is important to note that art is not always rational or logical (Danto 1995:14). A Masters thesis analysis should attempt to follow a logical line of reasoning and reference data or other sources of information in support of a particular argument. The nature of art, however, sometimes makes this task difficult.

Art does not always evoke a predictable response from the viewer. Often times the communication between the artist and the audience via the medium (which we call "art") operates on an emotional level - evoking thoughts and ideas that cannot be explained through logical reasoning. Sometimes art communicates with the subconscious, delivering messages to parts of the brain to which the rational, conscious mind is oblivious.

In many ways, art can be unpredictable. One individual might draw a completely different meaning or message from a work of art than another. This difference is heightened in certain artworks or forms of art, abstract art might be an example.

Another aspect that can affect an audience member's experience of a piece is taste. If a person finds a certain work of art unattractive or otherwise disagreeable on a personal level, this could influence their willingness to read the piece, to synthesize its message and to remember it. Since "taste," in this sense is a highly complex subjective phenomenon, it is difficult to analyze objectively and sometimes difficult to respond to as an artist or researcher.

As I have mentioned before, context is extremely important. It affects the way the audience relates to a work of art, and the way the audience reads that work of art in relation to their environment, their self and the world.

I used qualitative data to illustrate the line of influence between a particular artist (one whose political position is clearly communicated) and the political policy he lampoons. Later, I hope to illustrate how other artists also use their art to communicate an environmentalist message and to promote political change. Later, this thesis will present an informed analysis of the rhetorical mechanisms artists use.

Findings and Analysis

The key findings that will be reviewed in this chapter come first from open-ended interviews, a literature review and then from the questionnaire data. First, I will discuss statements made during interviews conducted from August 2009 - June 2010. Then, there will be a theoretical interlude examining the meaning of environment and Norwegian sociologist Ketil Skogen's research on cultural connections to environment. Next, I will detail a trip I made to the Hardanger region, focusing on the particular connection local residents I interviewed have to that landscape. Finally comes the analysis of the questionnaire data about *Oljemaleri*.

Most notably, the interviews suggest that Norwegian informants feel Norwegian environmental policy could be better overall at protecting nature. They attest the double bind I have suggested exists within Norwegian eco-philosophy between the lucrative oil industry and the importance of nature within the culture.

The questionnaires primarily show how widely varied the interpretations of Groven's *Oljemaleri* can be. They also suggest that the painting elicited an arousal of emotions in viewers. This further suggests respondents' sensitivity to the aforementioned double bind.

Interviews

The open-ended interviews with Norwegians from a broad sociological spectrum, completed as the first step of my fieldwork, provided two key benefits. First, they provided a comprehensive overview of important issues in Norwegian environmental policy today. Second, they offered several subjective viewpoints from specialists about particular issues or fields of work related to the environment. For example, the director of a consulting firm working with

research projects for the oil industry gave some introductory information about how oil drilling works (Informant 35, 01.05.2010). The heads of two different environmentalist organizations expressed very distinct platforms for their respective NGOs (Informant 7, 13.09.2009; Informant 21, 01.11.2009). An entrepreneur producing organic apple juice expressed his perceptions of challenges in organic business in Norway, comparing these challenges to what he experienced in the United States (Informant 3, 01.09.2009). In short, through asking both general questions about political opinion and specific questions about their fields of expertise, I was able to learn a lot about contemporary Norwegian culture from an environmental perspective.

The interviews provided a basis of knowledge about the importance of nature and the environment within Norwegian culture. The functional value of nature for use by humans through skiing (Informant 34, 01.05.2010), hiking (Bakke: interview 13.02.2010), berry-picking (Informant 9, 10, 11; 01.10.2009), or camping recurred frequently when I asked the question "what is the significance of nature within the context of Norwegian culture?"

One informant suggested that there is a prevalent "utilitarian view of nature," in Norwegian culture, where it is seen as "just there for our use. Then you have the artists' view of it (Bakke: interview 13.02.2010)." In this informant's opinion, artists appreciate nature for something else - perhaps its aesthetic beauty or a judgment of inherent value. According to researcher Tim Ingold, the artist's view is suggested as somehow contrary to this anthropocentric, "use-value" centered appreciation for nature (1992:44). Another informant, whom I met in the offices of his oil-industry-based consulting firm, suggested, "If you use the nature, if you are actually spending time in the nature, you also care for the nature (Informant 35, 01.05.2010)."

A few Informants also cited the Norwegian independence from Sweden and Denmark as a catalyst for developing a nationalism intrinsically linked with appreciation for nature (Informant 24, 09.12.2009; Informant 26, 28.01.2010).

"If you go to the National Gallery in Oslo and you see this Tidemand and Gude, that was part of nation-building and national identity. They were depicting farmers but also nature as part of this national identity. So nature being an important element as part of what it is to be Norwegian. And also the connection between people and nature (Bakke: interview 13.02.2010)."

Norway had to establish "unity as a country and the mountains and skiing was part of what made us special, in a way (Informant 30, 04.03.2010)."

"The mountains and the fjords" was a phrase that came up a lot during the interviews (Informant 1, 16.08.2009; Informant 25, 20.01.2010; Informant 26, 28.01.2010; Informant 30, 04.03.2010). Also, Norway as a nation whose wealth has come from nature, through hydroelectric power, fishing, and now oil (Informant 6, 11.09.2009), "because it is mother nature who has given us all this wealth (Informant 34, 01.05.2010)."

Many informants expressed only partial satisfaction with Norwegian environmental policy. Informants also expressed frustration with a lack of global follow-up on policy initiatives like the Kyoto Protocol or the minimalist Copenhagen Accord (Informant 25, 20.01.2010; Informant 33, 30.04.2010). When comparing their country with others, most informants perceived Denmark, Sweden, the UK and Germany as being more environmentally sustainable than Norway (Informant 11, 01.10.2009; Informants 13, 14 & 16, 10.10.2009). For example, a deputy Minister for the Environment stated,

"I think the other Scandinavian societies like Sweden and Denmark had to work harder at using their abilities for making something out of what they had. Norwegians are more about tapping into [the gifts of] nature. I think we have an adjustment to make now as we move into contemporary times because we've been so blessed. As a society, I don't know if we are aware of how easy our wealth has come to us (Informant 24, 09.12.2009)."

A barneskole (primary school) student in the environmentalist group EcoAgents confirmed, "I think maybe Sweden take more care against global warming or

global change than Norway because we have so much oil and gas. We keep polluting the world but Sweden do not (Informant 16, 10.10.2009)."

This is where Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* finds its target: in the construction of Norwegian national identity. Informants communicated that Norwegians today find themselves in a double-bind. On one hand, their national culture is linked to respect for nature. On the other hand, the oil industry is the country's most lucrative source of revenue and it involves exploiting, and potentially harming, nature and natural resources. The interviews provided a context for analyzing *Oljemaleri* as an informed, effective rhetorical work of art.

Theoretical basis: deconstructing cultural relationships with nature

Tim Ingold and many other researchers (Kals 1999; Schama 1995; Daniels and Cosgrove 1988; Garrard 2004; Pooley 2000) have evaluated human perceptions of environment and landscape. Perceptions of the environment's value influence the relationship a person will have with the environment (Ingold 1992). Some have also speculated about what value set is best, ecologically speaking, to promote conservation, protection and to avoid human-caused environmental catastrophe (Næss 1972; Guattari 1989).

A member of the Norwegian youth environmentalist group Natur og Ungdom remarked that young people have an important role to play in changing political policy on the environment, since many decisions affect long-term results (Informant 12, 04.10.2009)¹³. In his article "Another Look at Culture and Nature: How Culture Patterns Influence Environmental Orientation among Norwegian Youth," Norwegian sociologist Ketil Skogen identified four culture profiles based on value sets: traditional humanism, conventional, radical counterculture and redneck (1999:229). The demographic expected to spend the most time outdoors were those youth with a farming/fishing background, since being out in nature is a large part of their job description. These individuals tended to fall into either the "traditional humanist" or the "redneck" cultural profiles (Skogen 1999:230). The study showed that youth with a farming/fishing background were not necessarily more likely to join an environmental organization or fight against pollution (Skogen 1999:232-3). While the "traditional humanist" value set often approved of environmental protection, the "redneck" group did not - thus there was a split. This study suggests that spending more time in nature does not necessarily increase a Norwegian young person's probability of "caring for" nature.

¹³ Norges Naturvernforbund, Natur og Ungdom's mother organization, provides financial support and guidance to the youth group (Informant 12, 04.10.2009).

Sociological studies on "environmental orientation" or ecological consciousness often investigate the development of values and beliefs within a society. People within the society communicating with each other, including artists who communicate to large groups of people, help to influence and shape these values and beliefs. In the case of Norway, nature is a recurring theme in the conceptualization of a national identity. However, as Skogen illustrates, there is still a lot of variation in levels of ecological consciousness among Norwegians.

In the Hardanger Landscape: Interviews with local citizens

From the 26th to 29th of November, 2010, I took a trip to Bergen and the Hardangerfjord region to interview local citizens. The objective was to use the combination of interviews and participant observation to gain a deeper understanding of the landscape romanticized in Tidemand and Gude's seminal Norwegian National Romantic painting. I also brought prints of *Brudeferden i Hardanger* and *Oljemaleri* to provide a visual comparative reference during interviews with people in the actual landscape. My final objective was to get reactions from local residents about current eco-political issues affecting the Hardanger region - specifically the "monster master" or large power masts planned for construction through the mountains lining the fjord.

The trip was successful on all points. I spoke with five local individuals and learned something about the region, its industry, cultural heritage and trends for using nature. I stayed in Bergen and took a bus to Øystese, a small town situated on the edge of the fjord, nestled into a sparsely populated, hilly agrarian landscape.

Fløyen hill in Bergen, I looked out over the fjord and asked a shopkeeper about a large red edifice in the water relatively close to the fjord. He confirmed that it was an oil platform that had been towed in for maintenance or to be retired from its functioning place out at sea. The oil platform at the mouth of Hardangerfjord was a surprising sight. It suggested Groven's imagery in *Oljemaleri* might not be as exaggerated as I had first imagined. It is possible to see large oil rigs in the Norwegian fjords, close to shore.

Bergen has historically been a fishing village. Historian Marit Bakke explained the fish trade exaggerated class differences between the rich merchants and the poor fishermen.

"There were ships going from Bergen to ports in Germany, Italy and Spain.

There you had economic, social and class differences historically. So you might

say that nature and how people owned and used land was the basis for class differences in Norway. You had the same thing among farmers (Bakke: interview 13.02.2009)."

Historically, Hardangerfjord has been teeming with use values: national pride, tourism, fishing and farming. One informant mentioned proudly that in the "1800s the Emperor Wilhelm of Germany came to vacation here in Hardanger (Informant 42, 13.12.2010)." People from Bergen often go to Hardanger on the weekends to spend their leisure time, so during the weekend I was visiting, I followed suit. Øystese is the home of the Kabuso art center, where I visited and engaged in a long discussion with two of the art historians working there.

One informant reflected on the ecosophical question of preserving the cultural landscape. People from the big cities like to use the Hardangerfjord region for leisure time. They also recognize its significant tourism value and want to preserve the region the way it was in Tidemand and Gude's time. ("Norway attracts Europe [with its] nature, silence and [the promise of] a little different experience," says Informant 42 {13.12.2010}.) Another says, "It's very easy to sit in Bergen or Oslo and say 'yes, we want Hardanger.' It's not so easy to live here and schools get closed down, there are no shops left...(Informant 40, 27.11.2010)." She goes on to explain that some people in the region persevere in the challenge of maintaining Hardanger's cultural heritage. However,

"Farming doesn't pay enough [...] So most farmers in Hardanger are teachers or firemen or whatnot and then they have this farm on the side. But if that's what tourists want to come and see, who are going to be these farmers who have to work 364 days a year, 7 days a week, maybe 14 hours a day for nothing? Who wants to do that today? No one (Informant 40, 27.11.2010)!"

The informant remarks that an area not far from Øystese, called Eidfjord, there is a hydroelectric plant. She explains that the people there "are absurdly rich because they have this waterfall that got regulated into hydropower a hundred years ago (Informant 40, 27.11.2010)."

"In Eidfjord, that waterfall would never have been used for hydropower today because people in Oslo, people in Bergen would chain themselves to really

demonstrate, while the people in Eidfjord then would have no money. The landscape will make you money (Informant 40, 27.11.2010)."

This informant who works at Kabuso art center and another informant I met at a canteen in Øystese both grew up in Hardanger. They both agreed that the power masts should be built because they are necessary to the power infrastructure for Bergen. (The Swedish art historian at Kabuso {Informant 39} took the alternate side.) They also clarified that, contrary to Rolf Groven's new painting protesting the masts, they would be "up in the mountains [not] down in the fjord (Informant 40, 27.11.2010)."

Over 150 years ago, Tidemand and Gude's *Brudeferden i Hardanger* painting made Hardangerfjord the epitome of Norwegian natural beauty: the national landscape. However, one informant at Kabuso said she does not think that Hardanger is more beautiful than any other fjord in Norway¹⁴. If it is not Hardanger's innate aesthetic beauty that makes the landscape a national treasure, what is it? I argue that the famous work of art: *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, made Hardanger seem more beautiful, symbolically resonant and worthy of tourist attention than other fjords. Now, political debate arises around power masts in Hardanger due to its value as a national treasure. Tidemand and Gude's eminent painting exemplifies art's influence on cultural values and politics.

¹⁴ Although she admitted that since she grew up there she is used to it (Informant 40, 27.11.2010).

Questionnaire Responses

In addressing art's influence over political policy on the environment, it is important to remain aware of the "big picture." Eco-Art is a method of communication from artist(s) to audience in an effort to influence the audience's values and beliefs. Even with a case study emphasizing one painting, the lines of influence are various and complex. For example, one could investigate how the direct policy-makers (politicians) view art, as it may seem that their values or opinions matter more, being in a power position. However, visual artists in democratic societies do not make art solely for politicians, whose terms in office are finite. They make art for diverse groups of people (voters) with the intention of long-term impact.

The survey portion of this research project focused primarily on the first step of art's influence on environmental policy: how the work communicates the artist's views to the audience. Also, how the work causes the viewer to reflect and question his or her own values and beliefs (Guattari 1989).

Multiple Choice Responses

The data collected from the multiple choice questionnaires generally indicates that Rolf Groven's painting *Oljemaleri* did elicit a reaction from audience members, as Groven intended. It also shows that most participants interpreted the visual rhetoric in the painting as a warning about Norwegian environmental policy. Most informants also made comments about international environmental issues, which were not particularly Norwegian. For a graphical representation of the questionnaire data, please see Appendices 3 and 4.

The questionnaire data cannot prove that exposure to this painting within this context affected participants' political opinions, values or beliefs. While the data does suggest that the painting is effective in conveying the intended

rhetorical message, some variations in semiotic interpretations by participants can be related to the participants' existing values and beliefs.

The National Gallery invited me to distribute questionnaires at the entrance to the gallery on a Saturday. I found that about half of the patrons willing to respond to the questionnaire were not Norwegians, but rather foreign tourists. Seven individuals from Great Britain, three from Italy, three from the United States, two from Sweden, two from Australia, one from the Netherlands and one from Israel responded to the multiple choice questionnaire in English. There were also two individuals who did not disclose which country they came from.

Including the pilot test group, seven Norwegians responded to the multiple-choice questionnaire in Norwegian¹⁵. That makes the multiple choice responses quite heavily weighted toward non-Norwegians - there was a 21 to 7 ratio of foreigners to Norwegians responding to the multiple choice questionnaires *only*. This was because I tried to always give open-ended questionnaires to the Norwegians who participated in order to allow those people who knew more about Norwegian culture to write their own thoughts as opposed to simply choosing between a selection of mine.

The choices of signified meanings listed in the multiple choice questionnaire may have been narrow. This is mostly because the options came from my own subjective experience of the piece. Nevertheless, there was a good deal of variation in terms chosen. Also, quite a few participants came up with their own signified meanings, written in the "other" fields.

Appendix 2 contains nine graphical representations of responses for each signifier, distinguishing foreign and Norwegian responses from each other. For the visual signifier "large rusty farm rake sinks in oil mud," the majority of participants read "dead industry" as the signified meaning. The second-most-common response was "history," and the third, "Farming." Several participants

¹⁵ One of those respondents was the artist himself, Rolf Groven.

also utilized the opportunity to write in another interpretation, many of which referred to the transition from old to new industry or a society in flux.

For the signifier "sinking fishing boat," "dead industry" elicited the most responses, followed by the more descriptive "wreckage" and "fishing." Other interpretations ranged more widely than those for the farm rake. One thought of a "loss of culture," others "decay" or "neglect," and two informants agreed that a "loss of marine life" was signified. Perhaps because Norway was a major exporter of fish for centuries before the discovery of oil¹⁶, "profit" elicited a stronger response from foreigners (Informant 24, 09.12.2009).

For "Oil mud/oil spill" signified meanings were spread quite equally across six of the options, with most agreeing that the spill signified "toxicity." Several also thought of the "loss of marine life" and "death." Although only two participants selected that the oil spill was "prophetic," eight thought of the "BP Oil Spill" in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010.

A vast majority of informants associated the "rusty, sinking oil drum" with "pollution." Many also agreed that this object signifies "toxicity," "corrosion" and, surprisingly, "profit." In Norway, the concept of storing and transport of oil would naturally be associated with profit, as approximately 22 percent of Norway's Gross Domestic Product comes from oil, almost half of which is exported (Hovden 2002:144). In other words, with the largest percentage of the GDP coming from oil export to other countries, it seems logical that an oil drum would be associated with profit. (Although this particular oil drum has rusted and spills its contents into the fjord waters.)

The majority of participants who responded to the multiple-choice questionnaire (most of whom were not Norwegian) thought of "norwegianness" when they considered the signifier "Hardangerfjord." Several also agreed it could symbolize "Romanticism," "tradition," and "landscape." These interpretations suggest that Groven's technique is successful in creating contrast to move the audience to react. The oil spill is contrasted with a National Romantic symbol

¹⁶ "Only 3% of Norway's land is arable, so we have harvested by fishing (Informant 24, 09.12.2009).

featuring *nature* and *Norwegian tradition*, married in the collaboration of Tidemand and Gude.

Most informants responded to the "oil tanks with company logos" by agreeing they suggest "capitalism." "International market" and "exploitation" were also popular responses, while more Norwegians chose the former than the latter. No one chose the interpretation "taxable," even though tax revenues from oil incomes contribute to the social welfare system in Norway.

When prompted to associate the "oil platform" with a signified meaning, most participants chose the descriptive "exploitation of a natural resource." Not surprisingly, several also chose "profit." Later, the open-ended questionnaire elicited more emotionally charged responses to this signifier. Indeed, the term "exploitation" in English sometimes has a negative or even emotional connotation, especially when associated with people. One individual wrote "man trying to take over nature" in the "other" field.

The "temporary construction housing" signifier may have been one of the most ambiguous for participants, and the one that elicited the most requests for clarification. Responses ran the gamut of all provided options, and written-in answers were also widely varied. Thus, no conclusive dominant meaning was signified by the housing barracks. Groven does not render the barracks in such high detail as some of the other objects in the painting, and there is no discernable clue as to what is being constructed by the workers residing in those barracks. This type of temporary housing may not be as common in other cultures. For example, they are rarely seen in the United States and when they are, they look quite different. The barracks are another aspect that distinguishes *Oljemaleri* as a distinctly Norwegian painting.

Interestingly, more participants associated the dead duck in the foreground of the painting with "pollution" than with "biodiversity loss." These two signified meanings can have a cause and effect relationship. Oil spills, releasing toxic pollution, can kill off several aquatic species in the affected ecosystem. Activist groups have targeted pollution from the top oil companies advertised on the oil tankers in *Oljemaleri* as a cause of biodiversity catastrophes (Tragic History

Museum 2006). Oil companies continue to push for permission to drill near the Lofoten archipelago, where the fragile marine ecosystem hosts one of the world's last major cod spawning areas (Informant 1, 16.08.2009). An oil spill in that region could seriously jeopardize the world's source of cod fish (Informant 4, 05.09.2009).

Semi-guided and Open-ended Questionnaire Responses

When Norwegian participants were given the freedom to write whatever signified meaning came to mind for visual signifiers in *Oljemaleri*,¹⁷ the responses were varied. They often expressed more about the individual participant's political leanings on environmental issues and the oil industry. Generally the language chosen in these questionnaires was more emotionally-charged than the signified interpretations I provided in the multiple-choice version. This suggests that the painting was successful in arousing an emotional response in most participants. It was also successful in causing them to reflect on the double bind Norwegians find themselves in when it comes to political policies on the oil industry and other environmental concerns.

Graphical representations of responses for the semi-guided and open-ended responses can be found in Appendix 4. Only one participant at the National Gallery responded to the open-ended questionnaire, which did not list the visual signifiers in the painting (like the rusty rake or the sinking boat). The participant who chose the open-ended questionnaire wrote all of the same signifiers as were listed on the other questionnaire formats with only one addition: "just rock/mountain," which signified "nature disappears."

In some cases, it appeared that participants were responding with rapid cognitive association whereas others spent more time choosing the accurate signified word for each object. There was no discernable correlation between the

¹⁷ In the semi-guided questionnaires, participants were provided only with a list of signifiers. The open-ended questionnaires consisted of a blank sheet with lines asking them to choose five signifiers from the painting and tell what they signify.

recorded time participants took in looking the painting or writing responses to the questionnaire and the specificity of the responses.

A phenomenon occurred where different participants chose to write opposite words for the signified meaning of an object. For example, two participants wrote "sustainable" for the rusty farming rake (#4 & #42), while another wrote "farming has changed - it is no longer sustainable (#13)." A good deal of inference was required to interpret some of the fragmentary answers. Perhaps it can be assumed that both participants in this example were essentially getting at the same point: old styles of farming are more sustainable, but they are on the decline. However, it is not fair to jump to this conclusion.

A quantitative evaluation of the central tendency in the semi-guided, open-ended questionnaires proves that there were some signified interpretations that repeated themselves (Overton 2008: 45). Usually the most literal interpretation appeared most frequently. For example, the most frequent response associated with the rusty farm rake was "farming." Similarly, "work/workplace" was the most frequent response for the temporary construction barracks. Interestingly, Hardangerfjord was most frequently associated with "Norwegianness."

Ultimately, however, the open-ended and semi-structured questionnaires resulted in more diversity of responses. A great number of different signified interpretations were expressed. Response styles also varied between single words, sentence fragments and complete sentences. This response diversity suggests that the open-ended and semi-structured styles were more effective at approaching the semiotic meaning of *Oljemaleri* as a whole. Giving participants more flexibility in what signifiers they would respond to, and how, allowed them to read the whole painting without the researcher's voice and bias being constantly present.

Some participants used the page as a list of suggestions for objects to consider, and wrote free-associated signified meanings out of the seemingly logical order. For example, under "large rusty farm rake sinks in oil mud," one participant wrote "oil industry," then that same participant wrote "oil painting"

under the next prompt: "sinking fishing boat." The "oil painting" response suggests an association with the title of the painting - identifying the apparent contrariness in painting about an oil problem using oil paints¹⁸.

This free-association behavior gives evidence to the insight that art does not always work in a logical step-by-step order conducive to empirical analysis. In fact, for *Oljemaleri* to be successful in causing reflection on the viewer's own values and beliefs, it might be better served by eliciting a non-sequential thought process. *Oljemaleri*, like much rhetorical art (especially propaganda) seeks to elicit an emotional response from the viewer. The aim is for emotional arousal to peak intellectual interest and cause reflection on values and beliefs.

¹⁸ Although, oil paints are made primarily from linseed oil - a plant product - not from petroleum.

Visually Reading Oljemaleri

It is both the Romantic nostalgia for a landscape lost and the nationalistic connection to the fjords and mountains that Rolf Groven plays upon in *Oljemaleri*. The background of Groven's painting is a mimesis of Gude's snow-dusted mountains and blue, cloud-wisped sky. The foreground conveys Groven's modern-day political message.

The eye is first drawn to a sinking old fishing boat in the fjord. It is untethered and has fallen into disrepair - with broken windows and algae crawling up the sides. Next, we notice a large, half-submerged farm rake with a seat. It is an old piece of agricultural equipment, designed to be pulled by a horse to till the fields. The rake is sinking into dark and murky water. All around the rake and on the shore, we see rusty, dirty oil drums sinking into the water and mud. A dark residue on them shows that this area of the fjord has been contaminated with oil sludge.

There is a great deal of industrial metal waste and unidentifiable garbage on the muddy shore to the right of the rake. Twisted, tangled scrap metal, more oil drums and smaller cans can be identified in the pile of rubbish.

In the immediate foreground, a white duck lies dead, prostrate on the red and green rocks. Algae and lichens cover the tops of the rocks, while oil mud creeps up the sides. The duck's decaying body almost seems to blend into the rocky foreground. The duck may be a reference to Henrik Ibsen's 1884 play *The Wild Duck*, in which a crippled duck is both a literal decoy and a figurative metaphor. The word for "duck" in Norwegian is "and" and the word for "spirit" is "ånd."

In Ibsen's play, the Ekdal family lives a happy life with a daughter, Hedvig, and their pet duck. After a friend reveals to Hedvig's father that his daughter may be the illegitimate child of the man who gave him the pet duck, he becomes infuriated. "Deprive the average human being of his life-lie, and you rob him of his happiness," says doctor Relling, chastising the idealistic Gregers

for telling the father the truth (Ibsen 1918). In an ill-fated attempt to win back her father's love by sacrificing the pet duck, Hedvig ends up shooting herself.

In *Oljemaleri*, Rolf Groven uncovers the truth behind Norway's tragic "life-lie." He plays the idealistic Gregers, indirectly sacrificing the duck as he reveals his prophecy about Norway's modern "life-lie:" the bountiful oil industry. In the play, the dead duck was metaphorically linked to Hjalmar's daughter. In *Oljemaleri*, the duck is an allegory for the children, the future of Norway.

This metaphor does not go unnoticed among the *Oljemaleri*'s Norwegian audience. In a questionnaire about the painting, two participants answered that they associated the dead duck with "catastrophe." Superficially, this response may seem exaggerated. However, these participants picked up on the symbol's deeper meaning. Whether or not they were privy to the figurative significance of the wild duck within the context of Ibsen's writing, the dead duck serves as a strong rhetorical device. The dead animal appeals to the audience's emotions and propels Groven's ideology¹⁹.

Along the shore in the middle-ground sit several large oil tankers with the names of highly profitable, independent, multinational oil corporations. They include BP, Texaco, Shell, Mobil and Esso. A few tankers do not have visible logos. Shell's logo is partially covered by Texaco's so that only "HELL" is visible. The familiar logo design and red and yellow color scheme make it recognizable. The irony in Groven's message is two-fold. In English, the statement refers to the state of the fjord - the environmental destruction is seen by the artist and nature-loving Norwegians as hellish. Yet, in Norwegian, "hell" can refer to luck or a success. To Norway, the discovery of oil has been an incredibly lucky success, bringing them wealth and international power²⁰. However, it is a double-edged sword, as oil exploitation entails compromising Nature and the sublime

¹⁹ Or, tangentially, in the words of George W. Bush, "catapults the propaganda."

²⁰ Especially since the foundation of Statoil, in which the Norwegian government is the largest shareholder.

landscape that has been so significant in building a sense of nationalism and pride.

The middle-ground looks somewhat less hellish than the barren, polluted foreground, as there are some living trees and shrubs. The trees immediately encircling the oil tankers are turning autumnal red and orange, but the trees away from the tankers are still the bright green of late spring. It is as if the mere proximity to symbols of capitalistic oil exploitation are poisonous to the nature around them.

Where there stood a stave church in the original Tidemand and Gude masterpiece, there is now an oil platform. Many participants commented on this in their questionnaires, stating that oil has taken over for religion in Norwegian society. They also note the significance that, in the original, it was a stave church, which is associated with very old Norwegian traditions. One participant asked "Have oil and money become the new religion?" Groven employs a technique of transferring meaning and significance from the absent church to the oil platform through the appropriation of the original painting. This and other visual rhetorical techniques used will be discussed later.

To the right in the middle ground, there is a large road along the banks of the fjord, paving over some of the scene's natural beauty. Next to the road are four rows of temporary construction housing, or barracks, for workers to live in while on the job.

There are no people in the painting. The fishing boat replaces the bridal party boat from the original. As one respondent noted in his short answer regarding the absence of the church in the background, "Mammon ([the] Christian figure representing wealth and greed) is now God and has eradicated the church. I, of course, miss the Gudefolket [archetypical folk characters] and the fiddle player (Respondent 10, 23.10.2010)."

In the original *Brudeferden*, Tidemand's small characters in traditional attire represented humanity celebrating life in the midst of the great, sublime nature. Here, the traces of humanity are everywhere but the party is over. The

celebration of life and traditional identity is replaced by destruction, pollution and death.

Background on Rolf Groven

In order to contextualize *Oljemaleri* and its symbolic meanings, I will now provide some background information on the artist, his life and times. Groven's upbringing undoubtedly helped form his values and beliefs about the environment. Through visual rhetorical communication, he attempts to influence the political policy of his audience.

Biography

Rolf Groven was born on 11 March 1943 in Fræna, Romsdal, on the West Coast of Norway (Groven 2005). Rolf Groven's father, Harald, passed away in 1956 when Rolf was only 13 years old (Falahat 2005). His family was Christian and his grandfather worked as a missionary preacher within Norway (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). In an interview on 19 September 2010, Groven tells that his grandfather "was very clever at speaking, not like me. But he got an idea and he believed in something and thought 'I must tell that to the people - go to the people and tell my good ideas.' So perhaps I am like him. I think so."

The artist graduated from Molde gymnas, his secondary school, in 1963 and decided he would become an architect (Groven 2005). He studied for one year at the University of Manchester, one year at the Trondheim Kunsthøgskole, and then proceeded to take architecture courses for four years in the Architecture Department at the Norwegian Institute of Technology in Trondheim (Groven 2005). In 1969, Groven studied Architecture for one year in Iran (Groven 2005).

Despite having studied drawing and painting with a number of noteworthy Norwegian artists (including Håkon Bleken, Roar Wold, Kristoffer Leirdal and Lars Tiller), Groven is largely self-taught as a figurative painter (Groven 2005). In order to practice drawing and painting, Groven would sit in art museums and copy old masters. He cites this learning method as a potential source for his interest in using art historical references to create satirical contrast in his paintings (Groven: interview 19.09.2010).

When studying art in his 20s, Groven's figurative style was met with some criticism, but he became acquainted with Odd Nerdrum, who encouraged him to stick to the figure (Falahat 2005). Groven cites nature itself, and landscape painters like Hans Gude as his chief inspirations. He also idolizes renowned Norwegian caricaturist Finn Graff for his satirical, political renderings (usually of people). Groven says that when you take Finn Graff's caricature style "and mix it with the painters of the Brudeferden i Hardanger, [I am] somewhere in between (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

Groven has illustrated a book titled *Sex - Ja Takk!* for his first wife. He also designed an album cover for the hip-hop group Gatas Parliament (Groven 2005). His design works have been featured in several theatrical productions (ibid). He has had ten solo exhibitions and has contributed to group exhibitions abroad and in Norway, including several Oslo Autumn exhibitions, shows in Bergen, Trondheim, Molde, Moss, Lillehammer, Tønsberg and Drammen (ibid). Despite the contentious political subjects of many of his paintings, Groven has sold works to Statoil's Environmental Department²¹, Norsk Hydro and Conoco oil company.²² The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Universities of Bergen and Oslo have also purchased his works. The National Gallery purchased two of Groven's paintings. *Vestlandsjente* (1977) and *Atomgutten* (1977) are now in the permanent collection of the National Gallery's Museum of Contemporary art (ibid). *Oljemaleri* was purchased by a private collector from Moss after it was exhibited in Sweden in 1975.

²¹ In purchasing Groven's work, the state-owned oil company Statoil is providing financial support that allows the artist to continue making his art. Perhaps Statoil was interested in presenting their company as environmentally friendly through support of an environmentalist artist.

²² Again, the financial support from oil companies is curious. Conoco purchased a portrait of Vilhelm Bjerknes, one of the founders of modern meteorology (Groven 2005).

Identifying with conflict

In a January 2002 issue of *Dagbladet*, Groven was called "a pariah in Norwegian art," due to his frequent rejections from exhibitions and stipend applications (Dvergsdal 2002). Groven won only one stipend in his 30-year career as an artist before 2001²³ and endured many rejections from national art competitions. *Oljemaleri* was rejected from the national Autumn exhibition in 1975 (Groven 2005).

Groven agrees with the claim that he has been ostracized in the art community. In 2001, he applied for funding to create a 30-year anniversary exhibition: "The answer was a usual no. I could have presented 70 works from a period of over 30 years," Groven said (Dvergsdal 2002). Only five of Groven's 28 submissions to the annual government Autumn exhibition in Oslo have been accepted (Kristensen 2009). Many of his works depict realistic portraits of Norwegian politicians in less-than-flattering (or, in Groven's words, "caricatured") circumstances (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). It is not surprising that the judges for the government-sponsored Autumn exhibition would not choose paintings that are so openly critical of the men and women in charge.

While Groven may have been widely rejected by the art community, he has been embraced by historians. One painting alone, his anti-EU painting *Norsk nyromantikk* (1972), has been reprinted in 30 Norwegian textbooks (Dvergsdal 2002). Examples of his work have been reprinted in approximately 35 history books, including such notable volumes as Aschehougs *Norges historie* volume 12, published in 1998; Karsten Alnæs's *Historien om Norge*; and *Norges Oljehistorie* volume 3 (Groven 2005).

Perhaps historians have favored Groven's work because his paintings serve as historical reference points for a distinct time, place and political opinion. His paintings do not challenge existing boundaries in an art historical sense because

²³ Groven won the 20,000 NOK Galleri Brandstrups og Dagens Næringslivs stipend in 1995 (Groven 2005).

they are figurative in style. They rather serve as a communicative device for Groven to voice his discontent over political issues. Groven's images employ many of the same techniques that are used in propaganda and advertising. Yet they are more elaborate and formally detailed than most propaganda posters. Perhaps it is Groven's penchant for succinctly communicating a political stance in a humorous way that makes him appealing to historians.

The controversial artist has appeared several times on radio and television programs, presenting or defending new paintings. The topics covered on air usually revolve around the more divisive subjects in his paintings. In the 1980s there was a lot of contention over whether or not Norway should join the European Union, "so that was a good time to be painting because there was so much aggression between the "yes" and "no"s. But that sort of thing is not found in nature [debates...]. Because everybody likes to have clean nature (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

However, coalescence is not always the case with Groven's environmentalist paintings. Though historians may be more roused by his caricatures of the EU debate (especially *Norsk Nyromantikk*), environmentalist groups have also clashed with Groven in the past. In 1978, Oddgeir Bruaset interviewed Groven on NRK radio about his painting *Bevar Rauma* (Groven 2005). The painting shows the majestic hills of Rauma in the background covered almost entirely by a large power mast in the foreground. The mast transports electricity from a large hydroelectric power station. The painting had been commissioned by the Joint Commission for the Conservation of Rauma to be presented at a meeting to debate the power lines. It was rejected upon completion because of a controversial political inscription painted at the base of the power line (Romsdals Budstikke 1978). Groven converted a standard hazard sign into a graphic signifying the cooperation between the Right political party and the Labor party in promoting hydropower development. In this rare example of a commissioned painting, Groven put forth his own political opinion too strongly for the customers.

More recently, *Angel with Gun* (2009) and *Pope Benedict XVI* (2010), were exhibited at the Off Plus Camera Film Festival in Poland for two weeks in April 2010 (Kristensen 2010). Despite warnings from the organizers of the festival that exhibiting his painting of the Pope would be "dangerous," Groven submitted it anyway.²⁴ In response to angry reactions from Norwegian readers to his portrayal of Siv Jensen as *Angel with Gun* published in September 2009 in *Dagbladet*, Groven said that he *liked* the reactions: "That's why I am doing this (Kristensen 2010)."

In his own words

"The galleries in Oslo - the private galleries, they don't like to have me there because there is something with my art that is not great enough. It's politics, and that's not very artistic (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

"When I was 23 years, I thought I could change the world. I hope you are a bit wiser. [Laughs] [...] I haven't changed my mind [about political issues], but I've changed my mind in that way that I don't believe I can influence the world so much. I think that's realistic (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

"I like myself much better when I was 23. Because now I have given up. Nothing helped (Groven: interview 19.09.2010)."

In our interview on September 19th, Rolf Groven commented negatively on the function of his artwork. In verbalizing his disappointment that his paintings have not served to make a difference politically, he confirms that making a difference is an important objective for him. Although it is difficult to empirically prove that Groven's paintings influence political change, they do function in two

²⁴ ...in all its glory with a condom-adorned Pope seated on a pedophilic throne with male symbols covering his robes.

important ways. They elicit an emotional reaction in audience members and they summarize a complex political statement in a reproducible visual format.

Even if Groven thinks his art has not contributed to tangible environmental change, it is important to see visual art's influence as part of a larger process. The ultimate goal is to change the peoples' values and beliefs. This takes time and a variety of strategies working together. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on some contemporary political/artistic strategies used by Eco-Artists.

Eco-Art

“It’s not an ego trip, it’s serious, it’s politics, it’s economics, it’s everything. And art in that instance becomes so meaningful both to the artist and to the consumers of that art.”

- Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1994; He was executed in 1995.

Oljemaleri is an example of Eco-Art because it represents political activism toward environmental protection. Contemporary artists communicate political messages about the value of nature and landscape through various forms of media. When the audience experiences these works, their values and beliefs about ecology can shift, eventually influencing environmental policies. This section will provide an overview of a variety of Eco-Art forms and their potentials to influence political policy.

Eco-Art can be divided into several different forms of practice. In this section, I will first illustrate the most expanded forms of practice - those more interdisciplinary practices, which blur the line between art and political discussion, engagement or protest. Next, I will transition to established forms of environmental art, which uses nature as part of the process and materials of art-making. Finally, I will move on to the visual arts, where Rolf Groven's work resides. While all of these forms of Eco-Art are forms of environmental activism, each has a different relationship with political policy in terms of function and influence.

Expanded Practice: Ecological Art Groups

"The highest form of creativity is that which promotes the creativity of others."

- Joseph Beuys (Platform 2011)

As long as humans have been creating images, they have taken their inspiration from the natural environment. Today we live in a hyper-industrialized information age where a person can sit in his or her home and drive comfortably to and from work every day without ever setting foot out into nature. This distance often leads to our conception of nature being founded more in simulacra, reproductions or representations of nature in various media than in nature itself. Nevertheless, artists are often still inspired by the natural environment and communicate this inspiration through their art. Many use art to share a message with others, or educate others, about the value of nature or perceived threats to the environment.

Eco-Art Groups often seek support from state programs and cooperation with environmentalist groups on projects. "Education," "knowledge transfer," "community building," and "public projects" are some of the terms used in project proposals of ecological art groups. These public projects are also known as "ecoventions" and they have some distinct advantages over purely scientific experiments (Spaid 2002). These advantages include their wide appeal as they are designed on an inclusive social basis and their investment in a local community.

Joseph Beuys was an influential conceptual artist, art theorist and political activist from Germany. He argued, "every human being is an artist" and believed strongly in the power of art (especially socially collaborative works) to affect socio-political change. In the 1970s, he became deeply involved in

environmental politics and is credited as being one of the founding members of the Green Party in Germany (Tate 2005).

Beuys' artworks often dealt with ecological issues in society. One important long-term artwork was entitled *7,000 Oaks* and involved planting oak trees next to standing basalt stones in Kassel, Germany. The Dia Art foundation funded the original project and continued Beuys' vision by also planting trees in New York City. More single trees with stones have been placed in front of the Art Academy in Oslo and in Sydney, Australia (Cooke 1995-2005). This continuation emphasizes the socio-political significance of the concept and its potential to become integrated into environmental policy and behavior.

In part thanks to Beuys' contribution to the inclusiveness of community art, today it is common that several activist artists will come together and form a group around a common value set or policy. Artist groups engage the audience to reflect on their values and beliefs in a participatory, collaborative forum. The intention of community artist groups is to combine their resources rallying behind the same cause to educate and influence more people.

"One thing that we can say motivates all of our work and it's called bringing forth a new state of mind. Changing the way people look at the environment and their relationship to it. [...]changing the vision of place that people have [...] to an entity that they are part of, that they are connected to and all people around there are connected to (Harrison, quoted in Carter 2010:107)."²⁵

Eco-Art groups are community artist groups formed around a common environmental policy. They can range in scale from two to a hundred or more people. They can range in their policy and value set as well. Some, like *Art not Oil*, focus on one particular issue affecting the natural environment in their projects and seek to influence peoples' opinions on that topic. A few notable Eco-

²⁵ Helen Mayer Harrison is part of a ecovention artist team that works on community building and perceptual restructuring through ecological projects in particular public environments.

Art groups include *Platform* in the UK, *Stuifmeel Ideeën* in the Netherlands²⁶, the *Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts* in the USA and the *Green Museum*²⁷. The artists associated with these groups often use a mix of media or techniques to share their message with fellow members of the group and an outside audience.

Development aid initiatives are sometimes categorized as Eco-Art projects. One example is *Superflex's* biogas project. In 1997, the art group *Superflex* began a multinational development project called Supergas. The project involves selling energy production units to farmers in Tanzania, Cambodia and Zanzibar. The units run on organic material, such as animal or human waste and can provide enough energy to cook for a family of 8-10 people and lighting in the evening. *Superflex* is listed in the *Green Museum* directory as an environmentalist artist group.

Eco-Art groups strike a balance between art and education. They exemplify another forum for art to influence political policy on the environment. These groups often use community gatherings, exhibitions, events, interventions or performances as opportunities to spread a political message.

TippingPoint is a UK-based organization that sets out to encourage environmentally conscious art-making. The group's Australian chapter published a journal, which presented an overview of some research relevant to artists wanting to make their practices more sustainable. The American organization *Center for Sustainable Practice in the Arts* also provides information for artists about ecologically sustainable and nontoxic materials for art-making.

When asked via Facebook message whether he tries to use organic materials in his painting, Rolf Groven replied that this is not something he has considered. "No, I do not think about ecology when I buy materials. Perhaps I have created toxic pictures - pictures that were meant to warn against toxicity in

²⁶ This project uses the kinetic energy exerted by runners carrying "energy batons" to help light a public tree installation (Gural June 2010). More energy for the exhibition is provided by solar cells, "blending human and solar energy (ibid)."

²⁷ An online forum for environmental art curated by a board of international specialists.

nature. I have not thought about the materials I use when I paint. Perhaps it's time to rethink (Groven 21.03.2011)?"²⁸

By publicizing strategies taken to make their arts practice greener, artists can set a positive example. Rolf Groven entitled his painting *Oljemaleri* in 1975 as a self-conscious commentary on the linguistic paradox of his selected medium and the political stance he takes against the detrimental oil industry.

Platform is an example of a long-lived community art group, centered in London and established in 1984. The group is honest in detailing their objective to act as "catalysts for change (Platform 2011)." "...People find it hard to categorise them – it is not protest and it is not theatre (Curtis et al. 2007)." One project, called *Unravelling the Carbon Web*, is to democratically empower those affected by oil and gas corporations, and civil society as a whole, to influence, and ultimately transform, the operations of oil companies (Platform 2006). It is with an art group like *Platform* that art's power and influence over policy is most clearly illuminated.

Between 2005 and 2010, the Royal Society of the Arts in Great Britain sponsored an initiative to promote understanding of the relationship between ecology and the arts. The project used its high-profile website as a forum for discussion and for promotion of artists dealing with environmental challenges. The Arts & Ecology initiative has recently given over to a smaller, local participatory arts project based around sustainability called *Citizen Power*. Unfortunately, in this case the down-size might forecast marginalized influence. However, the new title, *Citizen Power* (much like the name *Platform*) clearly communicates the intention: to use the arts as an impetus for democratic political change.

²⁸ My own translation from: "Nei, jeg tenker ikke på økologi når jeg kjøper materialer. Kanskje jeg har laget giftige bilder - bilder som var ment å advare mot gift i naturen. Jeg har ikke tenkt på materialene jeg bruker når jeg maler. Kanskje det er på tide å tenke nytt (Groven 21.03.2011)?"

"Context is half the work"

This was the maxim of Tate Artist Placement Group co-founder, John Latham. The Artists Placement Group (APG) was established in the 1960s with the aim of repositioning the artist within a wider social context in order to discuss and foster artists' influence over political policy. The group placed artists within businesses or governmental bodies to shift the function of art towards "decision-making (Tate 2004b:4)." Artists were paid a salary equal to that of the host organization's employees (Tate 2004b:4). The aim was not to simply drop artists into a problem zone to document a problem. APG was rather focused on long-term political and social engagement of artists (Tate 2004b:5). Within the placement context, engaged artists could both create work inspired by their placement (including photographs, films, interviews, poetry and art installations) and also lend their own creative insight to their position within the company or government organization. Thus, the APG members could singularly affect private or political policy at work and also communicate with a greater audience about this experience through their art.

Artist placements are an example of an interdisciplinary blending between art and policy. Roger Coward was given the first government placement within the Department of the Environment in Birmingham, where he used film to enable residents to respond directly to the Department of Environment proposals (Tate 2004a). Through such a process, one can imagine documentary filmmaking as a support for the democratic process - unveiling what goes on behind closed doors when lawmakers are in session. Coward's films invited an open dialogue engaging lawmakers and the residents they represented in that region.

Artist placements are direct ways for art to influence policy on a small scale. Rolf Groven's visual art aims to influence many peoples' thinking about environmental problems, whereas Coward's films opened up a channel of communication and debate between a small community and a governmental department.

One type of art-making that emerged in the late 1960s is site-specific art (Kwon 2004). Site-specific works of art are created for one particular location, usually outside of a traditional gallery space. Many site-specific artworks fall into a sub-category called Land art (also known as Earthworks²⁹). In this genre, artworks are not only dependent on the environmental context around them but are made from natural elements at the site. Site-specific artworks draw the audience's attention to the place, causing the audience to think critically about how they relate to their environment and experience the world.

For anthropocentric humans concerned with use values, sometimes a creation by human hands in an environment compels more looking and consideration than the natural landscape itself. An image of a landscape, like *Brudeferden i Hardanger* can inspire reverence for that landscape more than the nature itself (Schama 1995).

Eco-artist collaborative team Newton and Helen Harrison specialize in what Sue Spaid calls 'ecoventions', creative solutions to real ecological problems in an environment. The team's projects have focused on watershed restoration, urban renewal, agriculture and forestry issues using community engagement in public space to solve one of these issues in a particular landscape (Harrison 2009). Their works involve interdisciplinary collaboration between historians, diplomats, ecologists, investigators, emissaries and art activists (Harrison 2009). "The local citizens' role as stakeholders is of paramount importance, since an ecovention's survivability depends upon those stewards who will protect and maintain it (Spaid 2003)." Mel Chin and Alan Sonfist are two other ecovention artists whose work deals with particular ecological issues. Ecoventions involve activism through direct engagements and community action, perceptual change in the landscape, biodiversity projects, urban forestry, waste treatment, urban renewal, watershed management, soil reclamation and more (Spaid 2002).

²⁹ Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) is an example of a sculptural earthwork consisting of piled rocks, earth and sand extending in a spiral shape out into the Great Salt Lake in Utah, USA. The work references ancient ceremonial earth pilings created by indigenous peoples, like Serpentine Mound in Ohio, USA.

Eco-Art groups, site-specific artworks, Land art and artistic urban reforestation (like *7,000 Oaks*) are contemporary art forms which directly call into question the audience's values and beliefs about nature. By bringing context and practice into the ecological sphere, they subvert the conventional line of persuasion (from artist through artwork to audience), encouraging the audience to participate in the meaning of the work. These forms of art encourage local citizens to get involved with the artwork - to participate, protect it, or destroy it (Spaid 2002). Visual arts representations of the landscape like Groven's *Oljemaleri* operate on a more straight-forward level and are easier to mass-produce. Hence, the visual arts may have the potential to communicate to a wider audience more quickly, but new forms of Eco-Art encourage community involvement and perhaps a deeper, richer experience of shared dialogue.

Reproducing the Landscape

Landscape painting also changes the value status of a natural space. It is the *representation* of a natural space, and not the space itself, which is valued as Art in landscape painting. When an artist reproduces a natural landscape in a painting or "captures" an impression of a scene in a photograph, the image can communicate many different messages about the original natural landscape. The way the artist chooses to paint or frame the subject suggests an intended reaction from the viewer. Artistic representations of nature can inspire a love of nature (Schama 1995). They can help us remember its aesthetic potential. Landscape reproductions can also show us how humans have used nature - lived in it, with it and off of it.

Unlike Land art, photography or painting can actually represent the natural space as it was without humans. 20th Century American Photographers like Ansel Adams, Nancy Newhall or Eliot Porter joined forces with the Sierra Club to

release illustrated pamphlets, books, films and other media promoting conservation of natural areas in the United States. Adams' dramatic black and white landscapes emphasized the sublime beauty of Yosemite National Park in California, USA.

During the later half of the 20th Century until today, an evolution has played out in landscape photography. Ansel Adams and the Sierra Club photographers portrayed the untouched sublime landscape as beautiful spaces that should be conserved and undeveloped by humans. Contemporary photographers like Joel Sternfeld, Edward Burtynsky and Allan Sekula (in his *Fish Story* series) respond to human development of the landscape by documenting it, rather than cropping it out.

Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky's industrial landscape photographs show the direct effect humans have on the environment. His method is to conceptually do the opposite of what Ansel Adams did in showing the majestic, perfectly untouched expanses of nature in a National Park. His equally expansive photographs document the seemingly endless effects of human manipulation on the natural environment. The photographs depict manufacturing scenes or industrialized areas.

Burtynsky's latest series called *Oil* is broken down into four installments: "Extraction and refinement," "Detroit Motor City" and "Transportation & Motor Culture," which show how oil is used and its effects (highways, suburbanization and vast fields of cars), finally he shows the destruction caused by oil in "the End of Oil" (vast recycling yards, defunct oil fields and broken down oil tankers) (Burtynsky October 2010).



Fig. 5 SOCAR Oil Fields #4 Baku, Azerbaijan, 2006 by Edward Burtynsky Photo © Edward Burtynsky, courtesy Nicholas Metivier, Toronto

Burtynsky's photographs operate in a similar way to Rolf Groven's paintings, although they do not use a directly referential, satirical technique. They also conjure an association with Romantic painting in the vastness and dramatic impact of their landscapes. Yet, Groven and Burtynsky do not revere the natural landscape as the Romantics did, seeing nature's sublime aesthetic power far overreaching that of man and his constructs. Instead, they honestly portray the colossal extent of man's influence over nature, precipitating its destruction.

While Groven's *Oljemaleri* is an exaggerated fantasy landscape painted over a Romantic rendering inspired by Hardangerfjord, Burtynsky's photographs are all real. In an image like *SOCAR Oil Fields #4 Baku, Azerbaijan* (2006) (Fig. 5), visual parallels between Burtynsky's imagery and Groven's hyperbolic landscapes are clear. The two artists use visual symbols of destruction (sinking,

rusty oil containers and polluted water) to induce an emotional response in the viewer.

"Modern life, dominated as it is by technology, artificial environments, processed food, mass production of consumables and mass transformation of landscapes, has disconnected most people from the natural environment but the arts provide a way of re-establishing this link (Curtis 2009:183)."

A 1999 study in the research journal *Environment and Behavior* found that emotional affinity towards nature can act as a motivational basis to protect nature (Kals 1999). Direct experiences of the natural environment have been shown to precipitate emotional affinity towards nature in a modern context (Chapman 2002:56).

"Creating Inspiration," a study funded by Land & Water Australia, suggests that the arts, too, can promote an emotional affinity with nature. Environmental art groups that use community performances or interventions, bringing audience members out into nature to experience art can achieve a threefold affect: educating, elevating experiences in nature to the status of art, and providing direct experiences of the natural environment. Reproductions of the natural landscape can serve as a reminder of our own experiences in nature, and thus promote sensitivity to environmental issues.

Groven's Contemporaries: A return to Landscape painting in the 1970s as a form of environmentalist protest in Norway

Rolf Groven was certainly not alone in his political activism over environmental issues in 1970s Norway. Several other artists also returned to what had come to be seen as an unpopular or outdated subject matter in painting: landscapes (Danbolt 2009). Groven and his contemporaries sought to spark political sentiments in accordance with their beliefs, usually on environmental issues

(Danbolt 2009). Using visual arts as a form of protest was an important tool for artists to communicate their sentiments about a variety of hotly contested political issues in the 1970s. The Yom Kippur war in 1973 sparked the first global oil shortage and led many countries to reevaluate the security of their investments in Middle Eastern oil. The Norwegian petroleum industry gained a reputation for being *stable* and more "environmentally benign" than oil from other countries (Hovden 2002:152).

Groven mentioned his opposition to the Vietnam War as being a catalyst that inspired him to protest (Groven: interview 19.09.10)³⁰. Indeed, many young people in the 1970s first got involved with political protest because they felt the Vietnam War was a pointless waste of human lives. Once people were mobilizing against the war, it started a wave of progressive activism among young people spreading to issues like civil rights, environmentalism, nuclear disarmament, non-violence and open-mindedness.

The resurgence of landscape painting in Norwegian art in the 1970s is an example of how artists protested and attempted to influence political policies on the environment. Groven often used a postmodern deconstruction and repetition of familiar themes, and repetition of his paintings through poster prints, to condition the audience to agree with his point of view. Other Norwegian artists in the 1970s conveyed opinions about environmental issues in a subtler way. Still, the intended line of influence was the same: The artists painted to communicate their political point of view, hoping to communicate this with an audience. By drawing the audience's attention to humans' relationship with the natural environment, illustrating the negative effects of development, and simplifying cultural trends as good or bad with various visually rhetorical techniques, the artists hoped that citizens who saw their paintings would vote for environmentally friendly representatives in Parliament.

³⁰ "I thought, 'I would like to do something with the world and Vietnam. Oh, it's crazy. But it's so silly to stand in the street yelling and yelling at the television - to look at the TV and be angry.' I felt helpless: 'What can I do [about it]?' I could paint a bit, so I tried to do my job [civic duty] in painting. So it was (Groven: interview 19.09.2010).

Leonard Rickhard (1945-) paints indoor and outdoor landscapes in a two-dimensional style drawing inspiration from blueprints. He juxtaposes symbols for the natural world, like birch trees or birds, with symbols of industrial or technological progress like model planes or tractors. By creating visual tension, Rickhard's paintings evoke an emotional response in the viewer. Rickhard shows "what apparently *was* an idyll - and should have been - [is] about to be destroyed (Danbolt 2009)." Rickhard's paintings convey a sense of anxiety about war and technology, showing how they dominate nature (Kroneberg 2005:2). Like Groven, Rickhard engages discomfort and anxiety in association with the current state of nature to incite a desire for political change within the viewer.

Contemporary Norwegian photographer Torbjørn Rødland's series *In a Norwegian Landscape* (1993-1995) references the cultural affinity Norwegians claim to have with nature. He photographs the subject standing in various outdoor scenes, surrounded by wilderness. Similar to Romantic paintings, Rødlands' subject is small in the vast, sublimely beautiful landscape. In one image, the subject is even surrounded by sheep - conjuring an association with the famous painting *Fra Stalheim* by JC Dahl. In the first two images in the series, the subject is holding a plastic bag from the supermarket Rema 1000: a juxtaposition of the banal and the sublime.

In a different series, *Nudist no. 8* (1999) Rødland shows a girl lying on a blanket with her eyes closed, basking in the sun wearing only her New Balance tennis shoes. On the blanket next to her is a pile of stuff - things one would take on a "tur" in the forest: a bag of apples, her cell phone and several other objects with their bar codes turned toward the camera. Rødland purposefully contrasts the natural with commoditization.

Rødland also explores the relationship between people, animals and landscape. Many of his portraits seem to ironically allude to the abuse of overly sentimental imagery in dealing with animals and nature. One of his *Nudists* portraits is of a balding man lying in the forest wearing only tennis shoes and playing with two white kittens. *Untitled* from 1997 shows a girl in the forest

kneeling down to hug her German Shephard, who stares up at her through a huge white anti-bite cone collar around his neck. *Cute Cute* (2002) shows a little girl reclining against a tree, smiling at the camera with a small deer peering around her shoulder. Each of these photographs presents subject matter that would elicit an "aww" reaction from the audience, but in exaggerating the sentimentality factor, Rødland forces us to reexamine our relationship to nature and other animals.

Propaganda

"Its clear political content has made Groven's art widely used in political propaganda; *Atom Boy* was originally used by nuclear power opponents in Germany." - Stor Norske Leksikon entry on Groven

An overtly direct link between art and political policy can be drawn through the mediums of propaganda and rhetorical art. When artists seek to communicate their political ideologies they can use the same techniques that the Institute of Propaganda Analysis summarized in the early 20th Century. They can also use rhetorical devices that originated in Ancient Greece. All art is political, but not all art is propaganda.

Art is a broad and highly complex discipline. It can include everything from straight-forward campaign posters or advertisements to complex abstract sculptures to literary works to protests. Art sometimes communicates with the audience on a logical, literal level, sometimes on an irrational, emotional or even subliminal level, and often on all of these levels. In this section, I plan to discuss the theories behind propaganda and then visual rhetoric. I will provide some examples of how these theories can be applied through various media and methods by environmental artists to influence voters and political policy. Additionally, I will illustrate how the case-study painting, *Oljemaleri*, uses some of the techniques discussed to communicate the artist's opinions about environmental policy in Norway.

The word "propaganda" has a negative connotation. While not all dictionaries define propaganda as messages seeking to deceive or mislead, the word conjures associations with dangerous exaggerations or demonization. Hitler's Reich Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, or posters promoting Stalin's reign come to mind. Yet propaganda has been used by many different groups and individuals throughout history to promote their agendas or ideologies. Today, in

the midst of the Information Age, propaganda is arguably more widespread than ever, with advertising and messages being transmitted instantly to previously unimaginable numbers of people across the globe.

In 1937, the Institute of Propaganda Analysis compiled a list of techniques commonly used in propaganda. The techniques include name calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking and bandwagon (Delwiche 2002). These techniques apply to all forms of propaganda, especially ones that use text or verbal messages. Here is a very succinct summary of what these seven techniques do: *Name-calling* demonizes the enemy. A *glittering generality* glorifies the propagandist's agenda or ideology by making a broad, positive statement. *Transfer* is the technique of associating with a positively revered concept or entity to promote the propagandist's agenda. A *testimonial* is given by a famous figure advocating what is being propagandized. The *Plain folks* strategy uses populist messages that appeal to or the general public. *Card stacking* is revealing only those facts that support the propagandist's agenda and *bandwagon* appeals to peoples' desire to be part of a group and behave the same as their peers.

Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* overtly employs four of these seven key techniques: transfer, card stacking, name calling and glittering generalities. He subversively transfers obvious associations in a reverse advertising technique. In using the familiar and recognizable *Brudeferden i Hardanger* painting, the artist would be transferring the positive sentiments of nationalistic pride and appreciation for natural beauty. Yet, Groven deconstructs the original painting as if it were a reverse advertisement. He subverts the association with nature, painting a destructive oil spill. He questions the concept of nationalism by replacing the characters in a festive, costumed bridal party with a dilapidated, abandoned fishing boat. In advertising terms, the original *Brudeferden* is selling traditional Norwegianness and human celebration of life out in the wild and beautiful nature. *Oljemaleri* uses reverse advertising, referencing the original to sell a negative vision of capitalism destroying traditional Norwegian livelihoods (fishing and farming) and destroying nature.

Groven is practicing visual name-calling by demonizing the oil companies whose logos appear on the oil tankers in the background. The reverse advertising transfer implies that these companies are harmful invaders to the original, sublime Norwegian landscape. The oil spill and environmental degradation presents a glittering *negative* generality - again, like he did with transfer, Groven uses a contrasting propaganda approach to forewarn destruction.

Groven is stacking the cards in his favor when he paints this emotionally evocative landscape. He only shows the negative effects of the oil industry - not the wealth a previously poor nation propitiously gained. In a sense, Tidemand and Gude were also stacking the cards, because they painted an imaginary scene, collected from a number of different visions, experiences and sketches in the landscape or in the studio. Further, it could be argued that every visual artist stacks the cards - leaves some information out. Photographers frame the scene. Painters choose which elements to paint, omitting lines, which make up the reality but appear aesthetically unpleasing or extraneous within the painting. A sculptors' materials decide how much detail the artist can render. Does this mean that all artists intend to con their audience, that they are no-good, hoodwinking liars³¹? Not at all. Creative license is what makes art, art. It's what makes creation out of reality. One of the major reasons there is so much controversy around ready-made sculptures being entitled "art" is that they are just reality with no manipulation by an artist. Creation, manipulation: that is how we define art.

According to a Research Coordinator at the National Gallery, Groven's painting *Oljemaleri* obtained a popular following among university students in the 1970s (Informant 41, 26.10.2010). Poster prints of *Oljemaleri* were mass-produced by the thousands (Groven: email 21.03.2011). Environmentally friendly households had copies hanging in their home. Students hung the posters up in their dorm rooms. One informant described a "radical" family from the neighborhood where

³¹ "We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies (Picasso Speaks 1923)."

she grew up in Romsdal that had a poster of *Oljemaleri* in their living room (Informant 43, 22.01.2011). "But they were communists," she laughed (Informant 43, 22.01.2011).

Norges Naturvernforbund "financed the printing, publishing and sale" of the *Oljemaleri* posters (Groven email: 21.03.2011). Norges Naturvernforbund is now the most prominent environmental activist group in Norway. According to the organization's 1976 annual report, *Oljemaleri* "was published as a poster, and was printed in two runs for a total of 6000 prints (Norges Naturvernforbund 1976, 24)."

The mass-production of poster prints of *Oljemaleri*, Groven's earlier (and also highly politically charged) painting *Atomgutten* (1977³²) and 23 others increased the artist's chances of influencing political policy through his paintings³³. *Atomgutten* was the painting, which sold the most poster reproductions. Groven reports 70,000 copies of *Atomgutten* were sold in Europe alone (Haugstad 2005; Gjendem 2006). The Molde museum in Groven's hometown hails *Atomgutten* as a highlight for Norwegian "political poster art (Gjendem 2006)." Postcards of *Atomgutten* were also printed and distributed in 1981 to promote the Norwegian activist group "Action Against Nuclear Power (Gjendem 2006)."

³² Oil on canvas, 100x130, purchased by the Museum for Contemporary Art in 1988.

³³ Groven also reported making his living off of posters in the 1980s, when his paintings drew in less money (Groven 21.03.2011).



Fig. 6 VG Newspaper clipping of article entitled "EF-Gutten" with image of the model for Atomgutt holding a poster print of the painting. 1979 from Rolf Groven's archives.

Walter Benjamin explains that mechanical reproduction (then using photography and film, and now via the internet) changes the experience of an artwork (Benjamin 1999). What was once a singular visual art piece that would be seen only in one intended context can now be mass-produced (Benjamin 1999). The same image can be seen in several different contexts at one time and the artist has little to no control over the experience the audience will have with the piece. The internet expands the reach of art reproductions to a global scale.

The fact that activist groups paid Groven for reproductions of his work presents an argument in favor of classifying Groven's work as propaganda. The association with poster art and wide distribution of reproductions further this argument. While many fine artists chose to limit the number of reproductions of

their artworks so as to maintain a high market value, Groven did not make this a priority. Instead, he prioritized getting the message out there to as many people as possible. Perhaps this is because he felt an affinity with his Grandfather's profession as a missionary (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). Groven chose to paint rather than preach in order to make a difference in the world (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). The influence of Groven's images was broadened by their profusion and international appeal. The more people see an image, and the more frequently they see it, the more likely they are to remember it and think about its message.

Visual Rhetoric

Oljemaleri can also be analyzed as an example of visual rhetoric. While similar to propaganda in the objective to convince the audience of some particular idea or agenda, the term "visual rhetoric" is newer, broader and has less of a negative connotation. Philosopher Roland Barthes helped to establish this new field of study. In *Rhetorical Homologies*, Barry Brummett illustrates how visual rhetoric works through the use of symbols or metaphors. A symbol works with the two key elements of *form* and *content* to suggest that two ostensibly distinct things are homologous (2004). Brummett argues that a homology, or a symbol, guides an audience and advises them about the shared meaning of two things - it is thus rhetorical (ibid:16).

Synthesizing the theoretical canons of semiotics and classical rhetoric, visual rhetorical analysis seeks to analyze the power of visual metaphors and symbols to communicate a persuasive message. Images, too, can manipulate form in order to "engage interest in the contents" or message of an image (Burgin 1999:47). Visual rhetoric encompasses more visual media than propaganda, though propaganda also aims to deliver a persuasive message. Thus, propaganda could be seen as a sub-category of visual rhetoric.

Rolf Groven uses several persuasive techniques in *Oljemaleri* that cannot be linked with propaganda, but rather fall within the broader scope of visual rhetoric. These techniques, conventionally used in written or spoken texts, can be applied to visual media as well. Some rhetorical techniques discernable in *Oljemaleri* include synecdoche, hyperbole and paradox.

Synecdoche references a part of something to connote the whole or (less frequently) a whole to connote a part. An example is the figure of speech "to ask for one's hand in marriage." Groven uses a visual synecdoche by painting Hardangerfjord as a symbol for all of the beautiful Norwegian nature. Images of "the mountains and the fjords" can be conjured easily in the minds of most

Norwegians. Hardangerfjord has become a visual symbol for that beauty (Informant 26, 28.01.2010).

Groven also uses hyperbole as a rhetorical technique - painting the problems in the scene as exaggerated to elicit a more emotional visual effect. Hyperbole and exaggeration are closely linked with emotion, as they convey a heightened sense of drama and emergency about a situation. Though not categorized as such by the 1937 Institute for Propaganda Analysis, hyperbole is also a commonly used propaganda technique.

Paradox appears in *Oljemaleri* as a rhetorical device in two ways: visually and ideologically. Groven's parody of *Brudeferden* does not cohere with the original conceptually. Elements repainted directly from the original - the snow-capped mountains and light, puffy clouds conjure a visual memory of the original in the audience. These elements are in visual and conceptual conflict with the environmental destruction in the foreground of *Oljemaleri*: the sinking fishing boat, rusty garbage and oil spill. Just like a paradox in oral or written language, this visual paradox functions rhetorically as it stops the audience member and makes him/her think for an extra moment to understand the contradictory circumstances.

The visual paradox that Groven presents mirrors an ideological paradox within Norwegian political environmental policy. Two of the five Norwegian politicians I interviewed remarked on the importance of wilderness conservation; wilderness is considered a part of the cultural landscape (Informant 34, 01.05.2010 and Informant 22, 26.11.2009). In several of his paintings, including *Oljemaleri*, Groven uncovers a contradiction between the environmental political policy of conservation in Norway and the industrialized exploitation of waterfalls and undersea oil and gas stores.

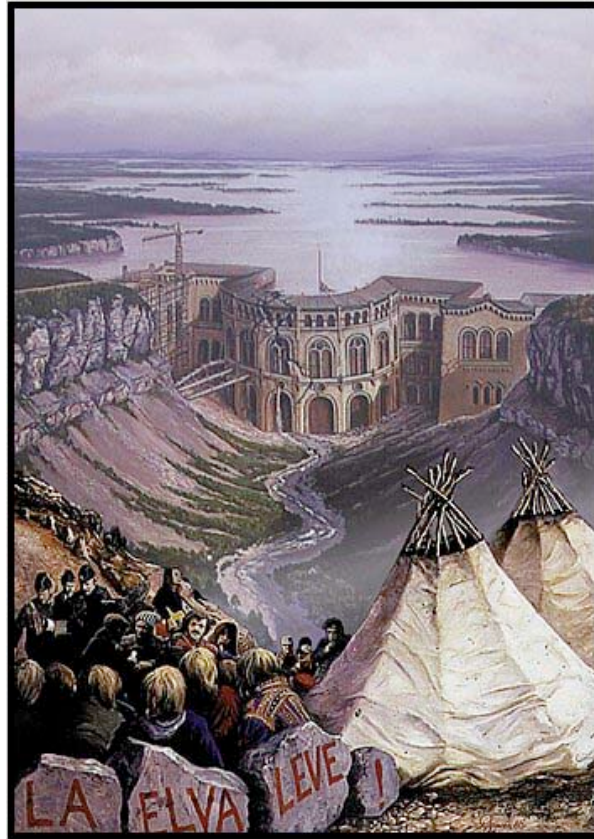


Fig. 7 *Alta or La Elva Leve*, 1980 by Rolf Groven. Oil on canvas, 100x130cm, owned by Kristiansund Art Society. 3000 reproductions printed at 60x80cm (Groven 2005).

Groven's 1980 painting *Alta or La Elva Leve* protested the controversial damming of the Alta river. Alta was an important natural source of salmon and fresh water for reindeer grazing mostly used by the Sami people in Finnmark. In 1979, just before construction on the new dam project was scheduled to take place, group of Sami activists went on a hunger strike outside of the Parliament. Protesters in Finnmark chained themselves to the planned construction site, but they were all arrested. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Norwegian government and the dam project was eventually carried out (Hjorthol 2006).

"Land was taken. It was not that much, but still it was important area. Grazing land for the reindeer and so on. Other implications, of course like the reduction of biodiversity in rivers. Many salmon rivers were dammed and had populations that declined dramatically. But in terms of CO₂

emissions, at least, it's a very good way of producing power (Informant 33, 30.04.2010)."

While the Sami people of Finnmark may have lost the Alta battle, it started a national discussion over indigenous rights that resulted in the 2006 Finnmark Act which allocated 95 percent of the land in Finnmark to a joint autonomous council, partially presided over by Sami parliament members (Justis-og Politidepartementet 29.06.2006).

Although Groven did not know about the dangers of greenhouse gases when he painted *Oljemaleri* in 1975, the painting reflects another paradox relevant to Norway today. A strong political investment in the conservation of wilderness areas coheres with a "green" ideological platform. The extensive extraction and exploitation of oil and gas resources from the North Sea is decidedly *not* "green," because of greenhouse gas emissions. These two seemingly contradictory behaviors are invested in with equal zeal in Norwegian society. Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim explained in an interview that Norway is making huge investments in rain forest conservation in countries like Brazil and Indonesia (Solheim: interview 13.10.2010). Until the discovery of fruitful oil reserves in the North Sea in 1969, Norway "was one of the poorest countries in Europe (Informant 34, 01.05.2010)." Much of the economic fortune, which makes it possible for Norway to invest in rainforest conservation abroad, comes from Norway's lucrative oil industry (whether directly or indirectly). Burning fossil fuels increases Carbon Dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere but rainforests have been proven to be excellent CO₂ sinks. Paradoxically, Norway exports fossil fuels (burned to release excessive amounts of CO₂) while simultaneously investing large sums of foreign aid in rainforest "sinks" to clean up the CO₂ again.

Groven could not have intended to refer to this current double bind Norway is caught in - between exploiting natural resources to massive economic and tax yields and contributing to climate change. In 1975, there was little to no popular attention paid to the subject of global warming. This is an example of

how a painting is silent and unchanging, while the global context around it changes and thereby alters the painting's meaning (Berger 1972).

Finn Graff's Satirical Illustrations

Rolf Groven cites contemporary Norwegian illustrator Finn Graff (b. 1938) as one of his main influences (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). Graff primarily draws political cartoons and caricatures, having gained national and international acclaim for his works. Graff won the Editorial Cartoon of the year award twice in Norway and the National Gallery owns some of his work (Simonsen). His caricatures have been featured on Norwegian postage stamps. He has also done commissioned illustrations for the New Yorker (Simonsen). In 2007, the King appointed Graff Knight of 1 Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav (Kongehuset 08.03.2007). Formally, Graff's medium, is quite different from Groven's, yet both artists are conceptually very openly political.



Fig. 8 Ola Nordmann, 2005 by Finn Graff

This illustration is titled *Ola Nordmann* after the collective pseudonym for a Norwegian who represents the whole population in general (like "John Doe" in English) (Nynorskordboka 2008). Graff uses visual cues commonly associated

with "Norwegianness," such as the cross-country skis, red hat and snow-capped mountains to further associate "Ola" with Norway. Ola, with his nose in his behind, becomes intoxicated by his own smell. He drifts into a wide-eyed hallucination as he watches himself in his hand-mirror holding the world as if he were its protector.

Part of Graff's illustrative style is to use details sparingly - he rather focuses on clearly communicating a political message or idea. This particular image is provocative as a harsh criticism of Norwegians, with their oil resources behind them. Ola Nordmann sees himself in the mirror as passionately wrapping his arms around the world, with Africa in the foreground of the reflected map. However, the audience sees that the map is not really there, this guardianship of the world is purely in Ola's imagination. Graff shows Ola wrapped in base narcissistic lust with himself, thinking that he is saving the world. The illustration is likely a response to Norway's intense commitment to foreign aid and development funding. The country now invests one percent of the gross national income (GNI) in international development initiatives (Jahnsen).

This and many other examples of Graff's work exemplify another Norwegian visual artist using cultural symbols to critique Norwegian policy. Graff often includes caricatures of Norwegian politicians and also has a penchant for scatophilic references³⁴. Caricatures of people are a form of visual name-calling, one of the tactics outlined by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis. The portrait of "Ola Nordmann" is a 'glittering' (though, again, in this case not pleasant) generality about the Norwegian public - one that grabs the viewer's attention with its very impolite characterization. Graff's illustrations have been commissioned by newspapers like *Arbeiderbladet*, *Dagbladet* or the *New Yorker* to succinctly communicate one position on a political issue. The illustrations are particularly successful because Graff communicates a position on a relatively complex issue using very little detail.

³⁴ Rolf Groven also depicts Norwegian politicians, but in contrast, he does not caricaturize them. Rather, Groven paints the politicians realistically but in exaggerated situations.

Seen as a depiction of the Norwegian cultural landscape, "Ola Nordmann" lies on the opposite side of the coin from Tidemand og Gude's national romantic landscape. This kind of landscape is probably not what Simon Schama had in mind when he wrote about images of nature increasing the perceived value of nature in *Landscape and Memory*. Graff is not glorifying the Norwegian landscape. Rather, he is using the landscape to detail his characterization of "Ola Nordmann." To Graff and many others, the natural landscape is a critical part of defining national Norwegian identity.

What are some examples of environmentalist propaganda?

Advertising campaigns for Green Peace or political campaign programs for Green parties³⁵ around elections are obvious examples of environmentalist propaganda. These messages are created for the explicit purpose of promoting an agenda, ideology or platform. Some activist art groups around the world have established themselves around the same principles as political Green parties but use art as their main mode of political function. Some use similar techniques as seen in advertising campaigns, while others focus more on education and community collaboration. Propaganda is usually imagery and/or messages that can be mass-produced and widely disseminated.

Political activist organizations like *Platform*, *TippingPoint* and *Art not Oil* encourage cultural and artistic response to political policy on the environment. Climate change is an especially popular topic among activist groups today. Visual arts media are sometimes constrained by their form and context within a long tradition of art history. As Roland Barthes says in his essay *The Rhetoric of the Image*,

³⁵ The Green Party in Norway was established in 1987 and is called called Miljøpartiet de Grønne (www.mdg.no 2011).

"The political dissident photographer[...] is involved in an apparent paradox, that of seeking to penetrate appearances with an instrument designed specifically to record appearances and appearances alone (1977:42)."

Activist art groups frequently incorporate artists specializing in different forms of art. All of the artists in the group rally behind one purpose: to influence environmental policy according to their shared ideological beliefs.

The *Art not Oil* group's website is full of provocative imagery, like the main banner, which shows the BP logo as a background for a silhouetted, altered version of a familiar photograph. The original image won photographer Eddie Adams a Pulitzer Prize in photography and showed South Vietnamese General Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting an alleged member of the Viet Cong in the head. In *Art not Oil's* version, the gun is switched out for a gas pump³⁶.

The reference to Vietnam is not a coincidence. The Vietnam war sparked a surge of political activism among young people in the 1960s and '70s. The movement not only protested the war, but also spanned civil rights issues and environmental issues. In *Norges Kunsthistorie*, Gunnar Danbolt attests to a particularly fervent wave of activism among Norwegian artists and young people in the 1970s reacting against the rapid expansion of the oil industry (Danbolt 2009).

This 20th Century resurgence of environmentalist spirit has carried over into the 21st Century. We continue to search for solutions to curb increasing consumerism and waste production from the growing world population, toxic chemical waste and biodiversity loss due to expansion. Since the 1970s, we have also added topics of concern, like climate change due to greenhouse gases.

³⁶ The London-based anti-oil environmentalist group Rising Tide also uses an evocative cartoon of a man holding a gas pump to his head as if it were a pistol he would commit suicide with.

Art has always been a potential vehicle for political rhetoric or propaganda. Most art created before the French Revolution was commissioned by a wealthy individual or group, often the ruling party or monarch. In these cases, the chief aim was to glorify the commissioner. Over time, art has transformed. Now, it is seen more as a product of the artist's individual subjectivity, a mode of communication between the artist and the audience. Sometimes the message is simple: a sailboat in a harbor painted by an artist whose main objective is commercial. Other times it is complex. Still, art is never apolitical. The painting of the sailboat may seem straightforward, beautiful, pleasing to the eye. However, the choice of that particular subject, the position of the artist as a salesperson and the very desire of the buyer *not* to look upon something ostensibly political every day in their home can be political issues.

Advertising

"When Michelangelo's Adam appears in publicity campaigns for ties, hotels, hi-fi, banks and political parties, we are apt to decry the sacrilege. We forget that the Sistine Chapel was painted to order, on receipt of a chit from the Pope, as a biblical advertisement³⁷."

"Advertising is the greatest art form of the twentieth century."

- Marshall McLuhan

³⁷ Searle, Adrian. (12 September 1994): "Gilding the lolly: artists in advertising: Damien Hirst isn't the first artist to turn his hand to advertising. Adrian Searle surveys the art world's incestuous relationship with commerce." *Arts and Entertainment*. The Independent. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/gilding-the-lolly-artists-in-advertising-damien-hirst-isnt-the-first-artist-to-turn-his-hand-to-advertising-adrian-searle-surveys-the-art-worlds-incestuous-relationship-with-commerce-1448330.html>. Retrieved 15 February 2011.

Advertising is another form of visual rhetoric, often using images to convince consumers that they need or want something. Both advertising and propaganda seek to disseminate information, generally through mass-media outlets.

Typically, advertising is created to sell products or services offered by a business, organization or corporation. Propaganda sells an ideology. In a study of how art can influence political policy, it is important to examine the relationship between art "for art's sake" and these more utilitarian forms of communication. Propaganda and advertising can also be considered art. Their function is more overt in the intention to influence people.

Rolf Groven is not fond of commercial advertising in public spaces, which increasingly alter the urban landscape in cities around the world. His painting *Anno* from 2009 is a protest against freestanding, lit advertising modules that are sprouting up around Oslo and other Norwegian cities (Kristensen 2009). Groven was inspired by Stans!, the coalition to stop lit advertising in Oslo. This group argues that commercial advertising destroys the cultural integrity of the urban landscape. On the other hand, the JCDecaux company claims that advertising is a contemporary means of improving the urban landscape (2003).

Artists sometimes incorporate product placements or elements of business advertising into their artworks. Depending on the presentation of that product, logo or symbol within the artwork, the placement might have a negative or positive affect for the sale of the product. Sometimes advertisers copy certain artists' styles to achieve a fresh, creative or recognizable look. In the case of Groven's *Oljemaleri*, the painter uses the logos of major international oil companies to advertise against them, associating their company's symbol with negativity and destruction. In a way, *Anno* uses product placement (the product being commercial advertisements by JCDecaux in public places) to protest advertising.

In addition to advertising's effect of undermining the cultural landscape, some of it also often promotes over-consumption. Certainly not all advertising promotes over-consumption - in theory, one could advertise for a decrease in

consumption, too. However, large companies most often use advertising to sell their products to a mass audience. Researchers have targeted over-consumption by people in developed countries as a key contributor to environmental destruction. Advertising also serves as a form of mass-communication: the most effective way of sharing the consumerist tendencies of the developed world with the growing populations of the developing world.

Commercialization and Context

There is a give and take relationship between advertising for products or services in the market and art. Art can be created for, against, or with professed indifference to advertising. However, both advertising and art, along with the audiences for each, cannot deny their socio-political context.

In 1997, UK artist Gillian Wearing won the Tate Museum's Turner prize, in part for her series *Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that say what someone else wants you to say* (1992-93). The project consisted of photographs taken of people, whom Wearing stopped on the street and asked to spontaneously write what they were thinking on a piece of paper. The subjects held up a hand-written expression of their inner thoughts, sometimes with surprising results: a suited young business man wrote "I'm desperate;" a policeman wrote "Help!"

The BMP DDB advertising agency overtly pastiched Wearing's project in an advertisement for the VW Golf (McCann 1998). The similarities between the ad campaign and Wearing's project were quite obvious - even down to some of the startling subject-message pairings (McCann 1998).

After these advertisements came out, Wearing could no longer create art for her *Signs* series with the same authenticity because the advertisements had reached a broad enough audience that most potential participants she approached were already familiar with the concept (McCann 1998). The spontaneity in the *Signs* project was what made it work for Wearing.

The audience was affected by this commercialization of Wearing's idea as well. The project was originally conceived as a socially binding experiment, where real people would lay bare real feelings for audiences to see and (hopefully) empathize with. However big business took the idea and did with it exactly the opposite of what the original title says: they gave models Signs that say what someone else wanted them to say.

In one way, Gillian Wearing's plight illustrates the importance of cultural context and time frame for a work of art. Particularly socially or politically-conscious works of art depend a great deal on the social and/or political environment at the time they are released. Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* is an interesting example of political timeliness. In 1975, climate change was not an issue in the social/political consciousness and thus had no bearing over the audience's perception of Groven's painting. Today, Groven's threat of an oil spill is perhaps more pertinent than it was in the 1970s in Norway, since most major spills in the North Sea occurred after *Oljemaleri* was exhibited. Climate change effects due to oil exploitation further complicate Groven's message within a contemporary social/political context, even though the artist could not have intended that connotation.

Artists are inspired by their environment, their Context (C), which includes other art or media, their experiences, social and political happenings, debates, opinions, etc (see Fig. 9). One very important aspect of context is the function of Time (T). The time frame refers to when the art was made and when it was perceived by the audience. In the diagram below, Time is shown as added (+) to Context, because Time is actually a part of Context, but I wanted to emphasize that it is very important part. The intended Function (F) of the Art (A) also influences the final product. Depending on if the work of art is made for a large or small audience, for sale or for communication, these factors would be in the artist's mind during the creation of the artwork. Finally, the expression of the artist's Imagination or Creativity (I) is an important factor in forming the concept for the artwork. The "I" factor would also contribute to the formal execution.

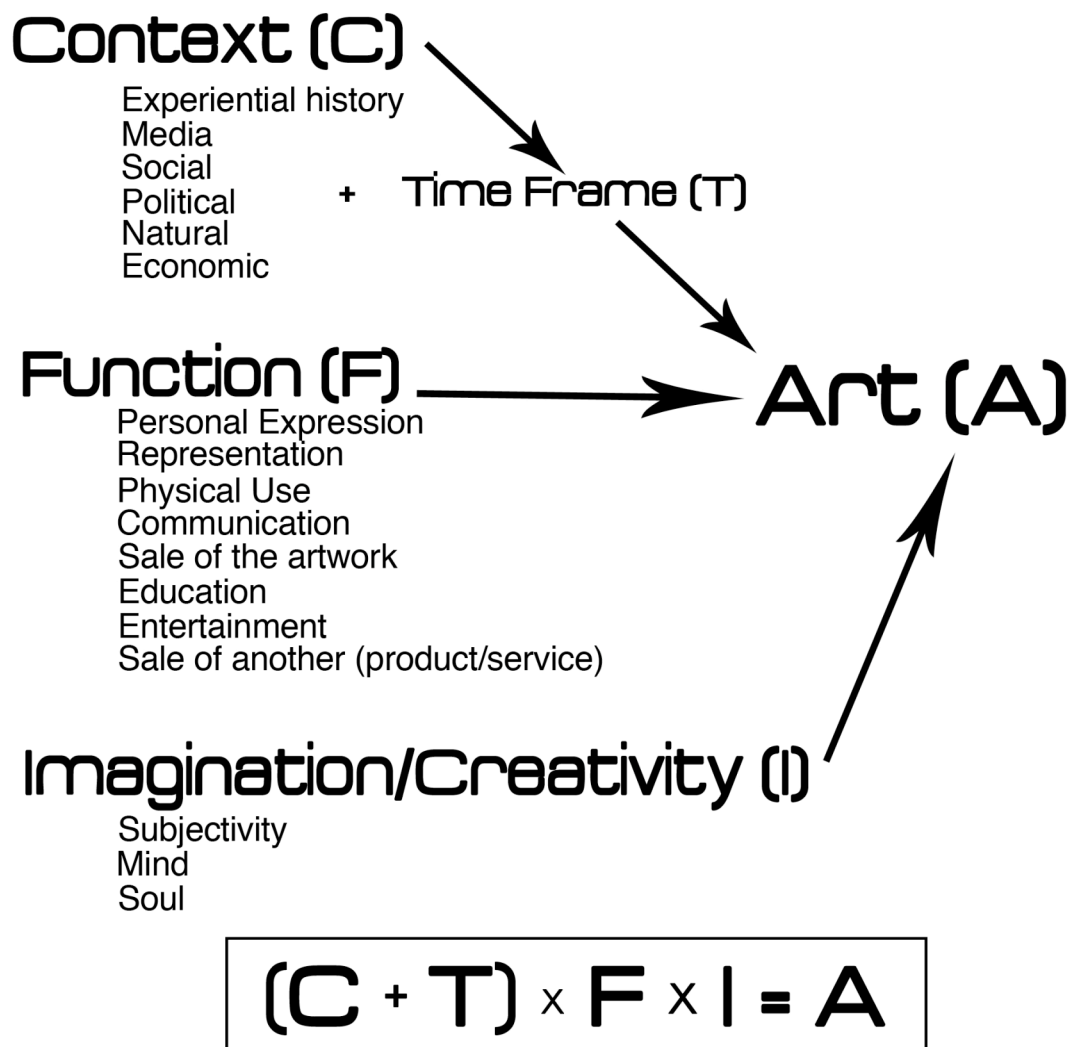


Fig. 9 Context, Function and Imagination, 2011 by Stephanie Haas

Another example of an advertising campaign inspired by an artist's project was Honda's "The Cog" commercial, launched in 2003. It was in part inspired by *The Way Things Go* (1987), a chain reaction kinetic sculpture by artist team Peter Fischli and David Weiss. "The Cog" also recreates a Heath Robinson contraption - an illustration of an exceedingly complicated kinetic machine designed to perform a relatively simple task. Ironically, while Honda intends to sell cars with this ad, the original Heath Robinson contraptions often spoke to the fruitlessness of endless techno-industrial development.

Car companies, oil companies and other major contributors to environmental problems, often use Romanticized images of pristine nature to make their products seem more ecologically sound. Car commercials with solitary automobiles racing around curved mountain roads lined with trees appeal to consumers' desires for solace and communion with sublime nature.

The BP logo uses shades of green and yellow to form an abstract flower shape. Some artists use such ironic advertising imagery against the company in question. As previously mentioned, *Art not Oil* referenced the logo in their website banner, adding a silhouetted act of homicide in the foreground. *BP wilts*, a cartoon created for *Platform* in 2006 also problematizes BP's ironic flower logo.



Fig. 10 BP wilts, 2006 by cartoonist Stig, for Platform.

Advertising, as one of the most pervasive forms of visual rhetoric, exists in an ambiguous relationship with Eco-Art. Sometimes it promotes over-consumption, while other times promotes green solutions. Advertising, a form of mass-media, is also related to propaganda in content and form. Advertising agencies have more funding and resources to disseminate their message to a broad audience - often overshadowing independent artists' efforts. Rolf Groven managed to print thousands of posters of *Oljemaleri* to give or sell to people who wanted to hang his image on their wall. Honda brought "the Cog" commercial into the homes of millions of TV-watchers around the globe, regardless of their political leanings or opinions. Through repetitive exposure and crafty artistic techniques, advertising sometimes convinces skeptics or non-consumers to buy products and services they did not know they wanted. Environmental activists and Eco-Artists are successful when they use the tenants of advertising to promote their own political message to a global audience.

The paradox in Norwegian environmental policy

"When economic gain is achieved through environmental degradation, we need to re-evaluate the meaning of wealth."

- Justin Carter 2010, 113

In this thesis, it would not be feasible for me to prove that there definitely *is* a paradox existing in Norwegian environmental policy. Nor would it be necessary to do so from a scientific or philosophical position. Instead, I wish to present data proving that some individuals in Norway *perceive* that there is a paradox. This common perception is enough to influence opinions and it establishes a context for analysis of Rolf Groven's painting.

Norway has been one of the leading countries in sustainability research and ecological consciousness since the defining Brundtland Report in 1987. In February 2008 the Global Crop Diversity Trust built the Svalbard International Seed Vault on Spitsbergen, the first large-scale seed bank designed to withstand catastrophes like nuclear war. One informant suggested that Norway probably has "one of the most aware populations on Earth about the issues around sustainable development and around climate change (Informant 6, 10.09.09)." What's more, 98-99 percent of Norway's electricity comes from renewable hydroelectric power plants (*Economist* 11.01.2009). Another informant said, "If you use the nature, if you are actually spending time in the nature, you also care for the nature," referring to the Scandinavian tradition of going 'på tur (Informant 35, 01.05.2010).'

However, the question of sustainability is complex in this country, where a government invested in preserving biodiversity still mandates a quota on Minke whale fishing. One informant said Norwegians "tend to think that if it's swimming around in a sufficient number, why don't we just harvest it (Informant 24, 09.12.2009)?" Norway is currently the most expensive country in the world and the Norwegian economy is booming mostly thanks to lucrative oil reserves.

This relationship further contributes to a double bind in Norwegian culture. While the country's financial success is dependent on oil as a profitable natural resource, the people and national culture value unspoiled, wild nature.

Cultural Democracy in Norway

Until 1986, the Norwegian state had transferred money to municipalities for specific purposes only. During that year, a reform was enacted allowing bloc grant appropriations to be transferred from the state to municipal governments (Bakke Spring 2001, 19). This enhanced the autonomy of municipal councils in deciding how to allocate funds, but also challenged conventional definitions of culture. The lines between culture and leisure became blurred, as sports activities with youth organizations were funded under the culture umbrella (Bakke Spring 2001, 19). The early 1980s also saw an increase in official political concern for artists within the Norwegian parliament (St. meld. 23 1981-82:238). The link between artists and politicians is most clearly exemplified through the transfer of monetary support.

It is the sense of a cultural community, a community of values, reference points, symbols and language, that tie us together as one nation, giving us a feeling of security and identity. Cultural policy has an important role to play towards reaching this goal. (Kulturdepartementet 1997-98:8)

The Norwegian government officially confirms the importance of culture and the arts in forming a sense of community, common values and nationalism.

Revisiting 'Ecosophy'

"The unit of survival is organism plus environment. We are learning by bitter experience that the organism which destroys its environment destroys itself."

- Gregory Bateson 1972, 491

Arne Næss and Felix Guattari are two key philosophers who helped to define "ecosophy"³⁸. Næss explores the fact of human presence on Earth from an inclusive perspective, making little distinction between strictly human principles and laws governing the rest of the natural world. Guattari defines ecosophy from an arguably more anthropocentric viewpoint. Both of these ecosophies have a place within Norwegian environmental discourse today.

Arne Næss's seminal work, *The Shallow and the Deep* established the tenants of a new global movement, called Deep Ecology. The considerable influence of Deep Ecology can be noted in the number of activist organizations it has inspired, including Friends of the Earth, Earth First! and Sea Shepherd (Garrard 2004:21). In *The Shallow and the Deep*, Næss distinguishes between two movements within communities of ecologists. The Shallow Ecology movement has a distinctly anthropocentric focus and generally encourages people to take up the fight against a particular ailment the world is suffering from (Næss 1972). The basis is shallow because, while certain concentrated battles against pollution or resource depletion may be successful on a small scale, they do not account for the bigger picture.

Both Næss and Guattari complain that contemporary political authorities and the general public are mainly only concerned with tackling specific issues

³⁸ Both Næss and (later) Guattari recognize a complex and growing global crisis, which impacts nature, societies and individual humans. The extensive techno-scientific transformations happening on Earth could lead to ecological disequilibrium and destruction. Both writers called for what would now be identified as a sustainable ecosophy to govern the policy changes dealing with growing challenges in the biosphere.

like pollution and resource depletion from a technocratic approach. These two works were written 17 years apart, and both philosophers wrote about issues that are still serious points of contention today. Paul Kingsnorth and Dougald Hine, the authors of "Uncivilisation: the Dark Mountain Manifesto," also argue against an oversimplified, praxis approach to specific environmental issues (2009).

The Deep Ecology movement favors a "total-field image," and describes organisms as "knots in the biospherical net (Næss 1972:1)." One could argue that Groven's visual art fits into the Shallow Ecology movement, because it identifies a political problem but does not overtly promote a deep solution. Groven promotes conservation and respect for wilderness areas in his many works referencing *Brudeferden i Hardanger*. In choosing this National Romantic painting as an inspiration, Groven reveals the anthropocentric values in which this conservation activism is rooted. We should preserve the nature because it is part of our heritage and national identity as Norwegians. Groven's art is more about people and politics than Deep Ecology.

Guattari begins *The Three Ecologies* by defining ecosophy as an "ethico-political articulation" (or: a wise set of policy rules - like in Næss's definition) divided into three ecological registers: the environment, social relations and human subjectivity (or the mind) (Guattari 1989)³⁹. Næss emphasizes the "deep pleasure and satisfaction we receive from close partnership with other forms of life (Næss 1972:4)," Guattari also recognizes the importance of interconnectedness between humans and their environment. He suggests that this should be sustained by emphasizing diversity and heterogeneity among humans (Guattari 1989:9). He warns that Integrated World Capitalism promotes homogeneity (Guattari 1989:59).

Guattari's emphasis on the individual subjectivity - that which makes us all unique - has had a significant influence in this thesis. Although Rolf Groven's

³⁹ *The Three Ecologies* stem from ideas outlined in Gregory Bateson's earlier essays, collected in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Guattari 1989, 11).

reference to *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, Norway's ultimate National Romantic painting, leads to some generalizations about a particularly Norwegian cultural ecosophy. It is important not to generalize the multitude of diverse and intricate subjectivities involved in art-viewing and political policy making. Arne Næss also wrote about a concept like the subjectivity. He said the individual should find his/her "ultimate premise," an ethical code influencing their life decisions, sometimes inspired by a religion or major worldview and modified by the individual (Glasser 2005:76).

Political Art: Persuasive Simulacra

Groven's mimetic reference to *Brudeferden i Hardanger* is one of the aspects that makes the painting postmodern. He uses symbolic references, homologues and simulacra to promote a political message through his painting.

With roots in the 1960s, Postmodernism in the visual arts champions irony, self-reflexivity and appropriation. According to Thomas Lawson, purely referential visual artworks, those occupying a new realm called 'postmodernism,' render "any particular medium," and "the aesthetic experience itself" doubtful due to their ideological, political and spiritual emptiness (160). Lawson heralds the "Last Exit" of painting and suggests that the complexity of the problem requires a complex answer.

According to the definition laid down in *What is Postmodernism?* by critic Stephen Hicks, Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* is postmodern because it uses an appropriated scene from a historically famous work of art ironically, focuses on negative feelings of dread and rage and is highly political (Hicks 2004). The painting is also postmodern because it engages in a conceptual fragmentation of the original Tidemand and Gude painting into key parts, which it then deconstructs. Groven painted parts of *Oljemaleri* as a direct copy *Brudeferden i Hardanger* (ie: the sky and the mountains in the background). He deconstructs the original by painting contrasting elements in place of original elements (ie: a sinking fishing boat for the bridal party boat and an oil platform for the church). This deconstruction relies on the familiarity of the painting to a Norwegian audience. Groven could count on his audience knowing *Brudeferden* not only because it is included in the permanent collection at the National Gallery, but more because of the thousands of reproductions of the painting available in various media to Norwegian and international audiences.

The proliferation of the *Brudeferden i Hardanger* image is an example of the power of simulacra to influence the cultural values of a society, which visually consumes the reproductions. Cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard uses the

phrase "simulacra" to elaborate on Umberto Eco's concept of hyperreality. Simulacra is an unreal or superficial semblance or likeness. Baudrillard suggests that contemporary conceptions of reality and hyperreality are equally unreal to the observer because our worlds are so inundated with reproductions. Norwegians are all aware of Hardangerfjord and, according to this study, associate it with natural beauty. While many Norwegians may never have actually journeyed to Hardangerfjord and experienced it first hand, thanks to the effects of simulacra, they can conjure a mental image of the place if prompted.

Advertisers have used Norwegians' positive emotional associations with Hardangerfjord to sell apple juice and other fruit products. For example, Sunniva apple juice, a TINE product, advertises that its product comes direct from Hardangerfjord. In a competition held from October 2010 to February 2011, contributors were asked to share their opinions about Sunniva apple juice for a chance to win a 10,000 NOK gift card. Two of approximately 150 contributors directly referenced the painting *Brudeferden i Hardanger*, and most referenced the Hardanger fjord in their praise for the juice (FellesJuice AS 2011). Contributors also mentioned National Romantic, the period which history books associate with the Tidemand and Gude piece (Benum 1998).

Bioforsk, the Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research, opened a new research center in 2009, claimed to be located in the actual area painted in *Brudeferden i Hardanger*. In fact, Hans Gude did not paint the landscape from a particular vantage point, but assembled the romantic landscape from a series of drawings and impressions of Hardangerfjord. An article in *Åpent Rom*, a magazine published by Statsbygg (answering to the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs) makes reference to the painting because the new Bioforsk research center lies near stave church ruins, which are thought to be from the church depicted in *Brudeferden i Hardanger* (Kvandal 2009:8).

"Hardanger is nature. Stark mountains that plunge into deep fjords and narrow roads clinging to the mountainside. Hardanger is fruit, bunad and the National Romantic. Bioforsk West at Lofthus in Ullensvang lies on a steep hillside right by the church ruins, known from Tidemand and Gude's famous painting *Brudeferden i Hardanger*. How in the world should one build a national research center in such surroundings (Kvandal 2009:8)?"

The language is sentimental and emotionally provocative. The writer articulates the association with Hardanger that Groven also uses in all of his imitations of the Tidemand and Gude original. Hardanger *is* nature. The last sentence refers to the architects' challenge in living up to the grandiose significance of the location with their design plan. The government agencies Statsbygg and Bioforsk are using the public's familiarity with Hardangerfjord from reproductions of the Tidemand and Gude painting to connect associated national romantic feelings with current government projects.

Oljemaleri has also been reproduced or copied in several significant forms. Each new context the painting is seen in can alter the perceived content of the piece. Seeing a reproduction of an artwork is very different from experiencing the original of that artwork within the "neutral" (ie: white walls, color-balanced lighting, quiet) context of the gallery (Berger 1972).

As Groven proudly mentioned in an interview, several of his paintings have been reproduced in books about Norway's history (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). His paintings communicating an anti-EU stance were released at a critical time before there was a popular vote in Norway about joining the EU. In history books, these anti-EU paintings are used to illustrate and visually summarize some of the emotionally charged arguments against the EU-proposal. *Norsk Nyromantikk* (1972) was also printed on the cover of a Marxist newspaper in 1972 (see Fig. 11).

Oljemaleri is also reprinted in written essay exams for Norwegian students. The students are prompted to compare Groven's painting with the

original by Tidemand and Gude and to interpret what the artist was trying to say. When Norwegian school children learn about the history of the Norwegian oil industry, they see Groven's picture to summarize the political reactions of the citizens opposing the oil industry's growth. *Oljemaleri* is well-suited to this function because it is easy to read and it is loaded with symbols for all of the fears people had about the oil industry in the mid-70s (pollution, spills, replacement of fishing and farming industries, capitalism, the loss of tradition and of religion).

Groven's paintings have also been reproduced in newspapers to illustrate articles. In fact, a Dagbladet reporter called Groven several times while he was working on his newest rendering after *Brudeferden i Hardanger* (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). The new painting is in protest of the proposed "Monster Masts," that will be erected in Hardangerfjord. Dagbladet would use the painting to illustrate an article about this controversy. Within that context, the reproduction of his painting would be seen alongside text in a periodical-style, which Groven would not write, detailing the controversy. The reproduction might be presented along with facts and figures, statements by developers, political officials or residents in affected communities. The painting would be reproduced thousands of times in printed form and distributed all over Norway for consumers to read. It might also potentially be uploaded to the online version of the article. In this context, the painting could be reproduced on even more screens all across the globe, with an almost infinite number of possible backdrops, screen-savers, pop-ups or other windows open behind, above, below or around it.



Fig. 11 *Norsk Nyromantikk*, 1972 by Rolf Groven reproduced on the cover of *Klassekampen*, a Marxist newspaper, in the same year⁴⁰.

Newspapers *Dagbladet* and *Nasjonen* refused to print *Norsk Nyromantikk* in 1972, the year of the Parliamentary decision that led to Norway refusing to enter the European Economic Community (EEC) (Groven 2005). However, the painting was printed on posters and exhibited "in Norwegian cities on the streets

⁴⁰ "Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, is now one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art (Benjamin 1999, 79)."

and squares in the summer of 1972 (Groven 2005)." The aim was to inundate the Norwegian public with this image. The repeated exposure was expected to cement the image in peoples' minds, along with the message it overtly presents. "Rolf Groven's poster played on both the [fear of] environmental destruction under the national surrender[...] and also on the secure political propaganda agent that existed in the alliance between the Labour party and the Conservative party in the EU case (Benum 1998:23)."

The painting depicts Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli of the Labour Government with Kåre Willoch, a popular Member of Parliament for the Conservative Party perched childishly on his knee. The two are sitting on a fallen Norwegian flag and a hyper-industrialized landscape with pipes forming the shape of the German Bundesrepublik eagle. This is an example of how Groven's work has been used as propaganda with the direct aim of influencing policy. In the outside context - on the street, as it were - the painting appeared unexpectedly throughout peoples' everyday lives and caused them to think about the political issue at hand.

In different contexts, reproductions of a painting can take on different meanings. In an educational context, *Oljemaleri* summarizes the sentiments of the anti-oil protesters in Norway in the 1970s. In a propaganda context (posters in the streets and town squares), the painting serves to repeat the political message of the artist to everyone who walks by. It is attempted persuasion through repetition - indoctrination. Advertisers, political institutions or other groups can use simulacra of works of art to conjure associations with the meanings and values associated with those works of art. Though many lines of reproduction, deconstruction, reconstruction and fragmentation, works like *Brudeferden i Hardanger* or *Oljemaleri* gain new and varied meanings. When third party groups use these images, or the styles of certain artists to promote their own agenda, the simulacra is further complicated within the web of visual culture.

Groven's place in the art world: Comparison with contemporary painter Ørnulf Opdahl

Groven's style, combined with his overt visual rhetoric, works against him in terms of acceptance into the elite world of high art. In an article in the Norwegian newspaper VG, Groven explains his response to art critics who reject his works on the basis of his figurative style:

"My painting is an ideological project in which I take up themes of the time and comment on them with my paintings. My style and technique have been stagnant, but that's not what it's all about for me. Maybe I could compare myself with a journalist who still has not learned proper grammar, but who writes good articles⁴¹ (Haugstad 2005)."

While Groven's art has been largely snubbed in the art world (thus far), he has been embraced by more populist forms of communication, like newspapers and history books. This is a more valuable place to be from an activist's point of view, as history books like Aschehougs *Norges historie* have a much larger and wider consumer base than Cecilie Malm Brundtland's *Ørnulf Opdahl: ved havet*, for example.

While more Norwegians may see and be familiar with Groven's work thanks to its inclusion in major history books, Groven's work seems to lack an enigmatic element that would make it valuable to the international art world. In our interview on 19 September 2010, Groven lamented the difficulties he has had with trying to sell his work, "I'm sorry to say that, but sometimes I have to change the motive because of bad economy. I have to think of 'can I sell this picture?' If I paint blood and bad things from Afghanistan, nobody buys it."

Another disadvantage to Groven, if his ultimate goal were fame and fortune, would be that his art primarily deals with culture, history and politics from a very *Norwegian* perspective - some of the politicians he paints, for

⁴¹ My translation

instance, may not be recognizable to an international audience. In an email correspondence on 2 December 2010, Groven joked about his desire to be seen as more international⁴².

A non-figurative artist, like Groven's contemporary Ørnulf Opdahl, might have an easier time finding international acclaim as an artist. His sublime abstract landscapes, while often referencing specific Norwegian places and themes on the one hand, are also universal. The paintings appeal to the contemporary international art critic in an ambiguous, modernist sense that *implies* deeper meaning but does not overtly express it. Opdahl's paintings are open for various different interpretations. They appeal to art historians whose job it is to invest time in puzzling over and deciphering complex meanings in art. Art critics demand subtlety.



Fig. 12 Ørnulf Opdahl utstilling, 2008 at Galleri G Guddal (permission granted)

⁴² " If you will attend my exhibition, you must speak American very loudly – perhaps you in that way will make people believe that I'm international"

A more quantitative illustration of this suggestion that Groven is not obtaining the same status level as non-figurative painter Opdahl can be seen in their comparative yearly incomes. According to Norway's open online tax record database, Skattelisten, in 2009 Rolf Groven made 69,150 NOK and claimed assets valued at 179,347 NOK - 54 percent lower than the national average (Aftenposten 2009). Ørnulf Opdahl earned 4,935,425 NOK in 2009, with total assets totaling 13,311,758 - 3,301 percent higher than the national average (Aftenposten 2009).

From an environmentalist perspective, Groven's works are an explicit cry for change, using satire to condemn political hypocrisy and flawed policy. Opdahl's "Mood paintings of the North," exhibited at Kings Place Gallery in 2009⁴³, convey a transcendental respect for nature, more spiritual awe than political wit. It would seem that in order for a piece to be considered worthy of analysis by one of Norway's most elite art historians, it must strive toward the sublime, obscure or emotional. In her book about Opdahl's seascapes, leading Norwegian art historian Cecilie Malm Brundtland praises how Opdahl does not paint "naturalistic and location-specific images," but rather "themes and moments, moods and expressions (Brundtland 1997:10). Groven's paintings are rather likened to highly detailed political cartoons. They appeal to the masses with easy-to-decipher visual rhetoric. They are controversial, but not controversial enough to be considered outside of the realm of illustration.

Groven rejects the idea of being called a populist, and considers it a pejorative term coming from art critics (Haugstad 2005). However, *Oljemaleri* did convey the sentiments of many people in the 1970s; it was especially significant to students (Benum 1998). One of my informants who studies art and architecture said, "it's a bit too sentimental for me. [...] I can't relate (Informant 40,

⁴³ <http://www.kingsplace.co.uk/visual-arts/kings-place-gallery/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/ornulf-opdahl-mood-paintings-of-the-north>

27.11.2010)⁴⁴." However, several other informants commented on the prophetic nature of Groven's paintings, *Oljemaleri* in particular. In the questionnaire, 25 percent (16 of 63) informants stated that *Oljemaleri* conjured an association with the Exxon Valdez oil spill, or Deep Water Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico in Spring of 2010.

Groven's work is referenced in popular textbooks about Norway's history. Thus, he has been written into Norwegian school curriculums. Children are exposed to his work as illustrative of one side of a political argument, as the works of an artist overtly expressing his values and beliefs. Groven is featured in news articles frequently, not only promoting a new exhibition, but also when he illustrates a current political controversy with one of his paintings. On the other hand, the more financially successful Opdahl is not so integrated into the everyday lives of learners and newspaper readers - the general public. With its abstract forms and inexplicit political messages, Opdahl's work is currently quarantined in the world of the highly educated art lover, the collector, the art critic or the gallery manager. Perhaps from a sociological and historical perspective, it will be Groven's explicit propaganda paintings, rather than Opdahl's ambiguous landscapes, that will be remembered as art for the people.

⁴⁴ Perhaps this is because the informant is well versed in the tropes of 20th Century art history and quickly classified *Oljemaleri* as a text-book example of 1970s postmodernism in its satirical reference to *Brudeferden i Hardanger*.

Conclusion

Painting as an art form is inherently tied to one time and place - the context of its creation. While the context around it changes, the perceived meaning of the painting can change as well. As several informants pointed out, Rolf Groven's *Oljemaleri* was prophetic in foretelling major oil spills and climate change. Now, Norway finds itself in an ecosophical double bind between a lucrative oil industry and wanting to save the globe from environmental destruction.

Visual reproductions of the natural landscape can sometimes impact the value of the landscape to humans. Hardangerfjord, for example, has come to be associated with nationalism and natural beauty because of a famous work of art - *Brudeferden i Hardanger*. The visual arts make permanent the transient experience of nature, adding aesthetic value to the previously only utilitarian use-values. Artists can enhance the value of nature by reproducing it with their human hands and influence audiences to preserve the natural landscape. Thus, by affecting peoples' values and beliefs, art influences political policy on the environment.

Groven's figurative painting style does not challenge art historical boundaries. The artist is more interested in sharing his political message with a large audience. Painting does not engage the audience in a dialogue or collaboration with the artist, like contemporary art forms like artist placements or ecoventions can. One advantage of the visual arts is that they are easily reproduced and shared with people in many different contexts around the globe. Rolf Groven uses visual rhetorical devices, like those used in advertising or propaganda to influence the audience's values and beliefs.

Many Eco-Artists reveal problems in political policy on the environment, but rarely propose solutions to the problems, placing them in the realm of shallow ecology. Ecoventions propose solutions to problems, usually on a small-scale that is manageable for one artist or a team. Their proactive nature makes ecoventions seem like the best "next step" in the evolution of Eco-Art. However,

the global scale of these problems necessitates the continuation of visual arts to communicate values and beliefs on a large scale.

70,000 copies of *Atomgutten* were distributed throughout Europe in the early 1980s. Since then, the percentage of total electricity produced in the world using nuclear power has leveled off and slightly decreased (World Nuclear Association 2009). This is not to suggest that Rolf Groven single-handedly affected the use of nuclear power globally. In fact, with the recent nuclear catastrophe in Japan and the Deep Water Horizon oil spill in 2010, it is not surprising that Groven feels "resigned" when his warnings are not heeded (Groven: interview 19.09.2010). Nevertheless, political change first requires communication. Activist Eco-Art in a visual, reproducible format is crucial to inspiring contemplation and dialogue about the values and beliefs that lead to political policies on the environment.

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- Informant 6. University of Oslo, Oslo: September 11, 2009.
- Informant 7. Sentrum, Oslo: September 13, 2009.
- Informant 8. Tøyen, Oslo: October 1, 2009.

- Informant 11. Stortinget, Oslo: October 1, 2009.
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- Informant 21. Grünerløkka, Oslo: November 1, 2009.
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- Informant 25. Sentrum, Oslo: January 1, 2010.
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- Informant 30. Kjelsås, Oslo: March 4, 2010.
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- Informant 36. Sentrum, Stavanger. May 2, 2010.
- Informant 39. Øystese: November 27, 2010.
- Informant 40. Øystese: November 27, 2010.
- Informant 41. Blindern, Oslo: October 26, 2010.
- Informant 42. Øystese: December 13, 2010.
- Informant 43. Frogner, Oslo: January 22, 2011.

Appendix 1 - Informant Profiles

Date	Participant Number	Sex	Occupation (interviewed as)	Age Range
16.08.2009	1.	F	University Student	18 - 25
29.08.2009	2.	M	Fisherman	50 - 65
01.09.2009	3.	M	Organic produce distributor	50 - 65
05.09.2009	4.	M	Political Activist	25 - 35
05.09.2009	5.	F	Organic produce distributor	65 - 75
11.09.2009	6.	M	University Professor	35 - 50
13.09.2009	7.	M	NGO Leader	50 - 65
01.10.2009	8.	M	Environmental Activist	25 - 35
01.10.2009	9.	F	Environmental Activist	25 - 35
01.10.2009	10.	F	Environmental Activist	18 - 25
01.10.2009	11.	M	Politician	35 - 50
04.10.2009	12.	F	Environmental Activist	18 - 25
10.10.2009	13.	F	Environmental Activist	8 - 14
10.10.2009	14.	F	Environmental Activist	8 - 14
10.10.2009	15.	F	Environmental Activist	8 - 14

10.10.2009	16.	M	Environmental Activist	8 - 14
10.10.2009	17.	M	Environmental Activist	8 - 14
10.10.2009	18.	M	Environmental Activist	8 - 14
12.10.2009	19.	M	Politician	50 - 65
16.10.2009	20.	M	University Professor	50 - 65
01.11.2009	21.	M	NGO Leader	50 - 65
26.11.2009	22.	M	Politician	25 - 35
02.12.2009	23.	M	NGO Administrator	35 - 50
09.12.2009	24.	F	Politician	35 - 50
20.01.2010	25.	M	Corporate Researcher	35 - 50
28.01.2010	26.	F	Business Administrator	35 - 50
13.02.2010	27.	F	Researcher	50 - 65
14.02.2010	28.	F	Retail Associate	18 - 25
14.02.2010	29.	M	Lift Operator	25 - 35
04.03.2010	30.	F	Museum Administrator	25 - 35
21.04.2010	31.	F	Retail Associate	18 - 25
21.04.2010	32.	F	Museum Curator	35 - 50
30.04.2010	33.	M	University Professor	35 - 50
01.05.2010	34.	M	NGO Leader	65 - 75
01.05.2010	35.	M	Corporate Consultant	50 - 65

02.05.2010	36.	M	Engineer	25 - 35
17.05.2010	37.	F	Social Worker	50 - 65
19.09.2010	38.	M	Rolf Groven - Artist	65 - 75
27.11.2010	39.	F	Art Historian	25 - 35
27.11.2010	40.	F	Architecture Student	25 - 35
26.10.2010	41.	F	Museum Coordinator	65 - 75
13.12.2010	42.	F	Journalist	50 - 65
22.01.2011	43.	F	Opera Singer	50 - 65

Appendix 2 - Welcome Signs at National Gallery Intervention

These signs were printed on A4 paper and hung in front of a table in the main entry stairwell of the National Gallery. These show the printed portion of the informed consent respondents gave by participating. The text on the sign in Norwegian was colored black and the sign in English had gray text.

"Hei! Velkommen til Nasjonalgalleriet!

Jeg er en mastergradsstudent på SUM (Senter for Utvikling og Miljø) på Universitetet i Oslo. Vennligst ta noen minutter å svare på en kort undersøkelse om oppfatninger [forestillinger] av natur og kunst i norsk kultur.

Jeg undersøker hvordan kunst påvirker livet, spesielt miljøpolitikken i Norge.

Personlig informasjon er ekstrautstyr på denne undersøkelsen. Hvis dette temaet er av spesiell interesse for deg, kan du skrive din kontaktinformasjon slik at vi kan diskutere mer i fremtiden.

Takk for at du deltar!

Hello! Welcome to the National Gallery!

I am a Masters Student at SUM (Senter for Utvikling og Miljø) at the University of Oslo. Please take a few minutes to answer a short survey about perceptions of nature and art in Norwegian culture.

I am investigating the way art influences life in terms of environmental policy in Norway.

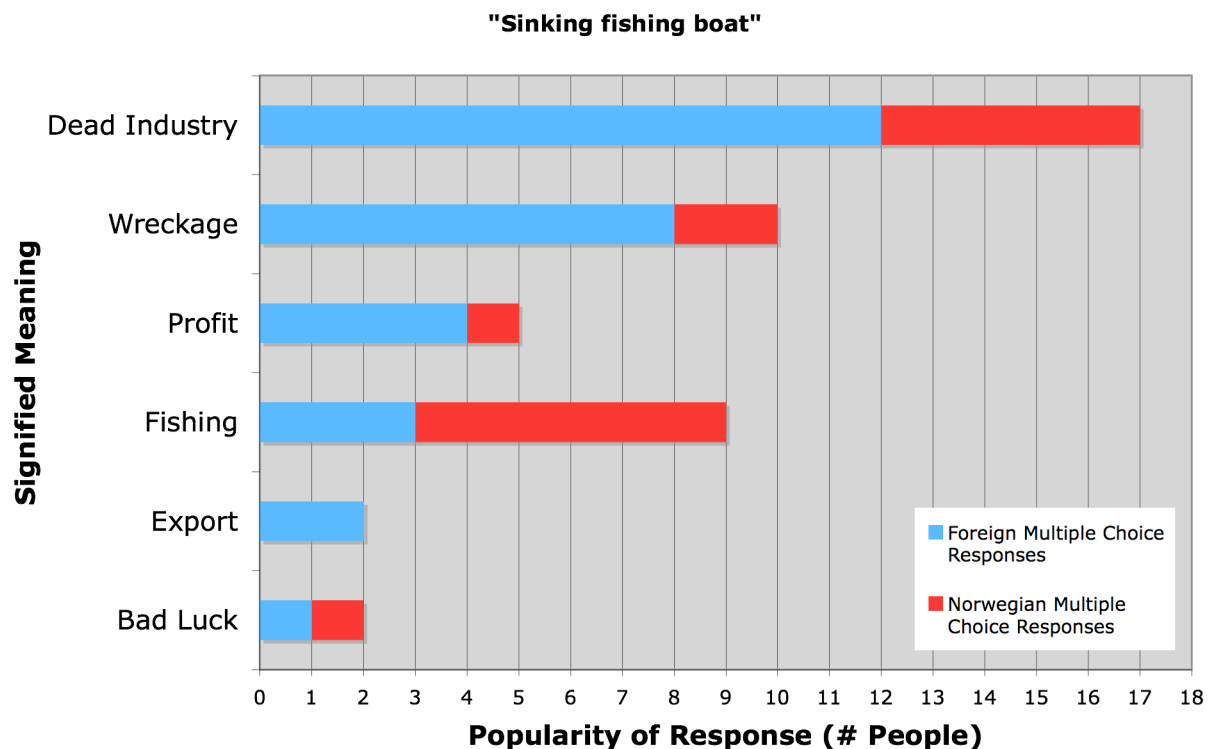
Personal information is optional on this survey.

If this topic is of particular interest to you, please provide your contact information on the Survey form and so that we can discuss it more in the future.

Thank you for participating!"

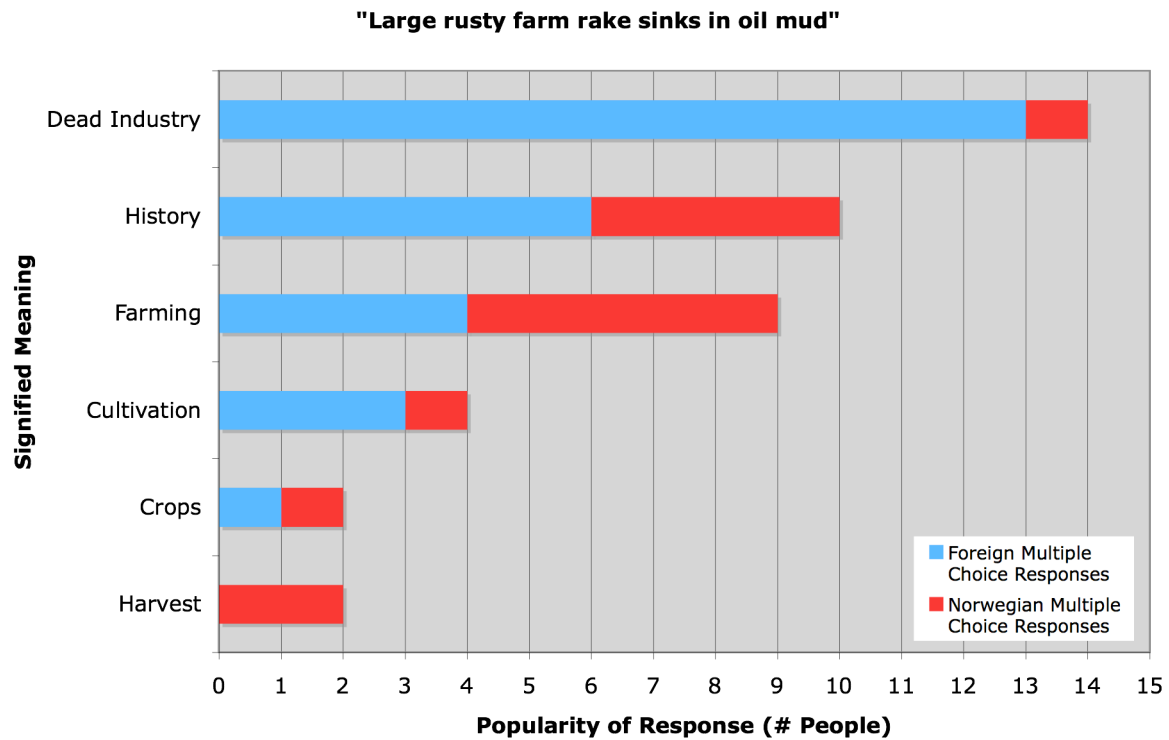
Appendix 3 - Multiple Choice Responses

Here, the responses from 28 multiple choice surveys - 21 of which were distributed in English to foreign visitors of the National Gallery. The 7 questionnaires in Norwegian language were part of the pilot study, and those responses are shown in *red*. Foreign responses are in *blue*. Each graph is titled after the visual signifier and the signified meanings are listed on the left side. Each signifier from *Oljemaleri* had an "Other" field where the participant could write in a signified meaning that was not listed.



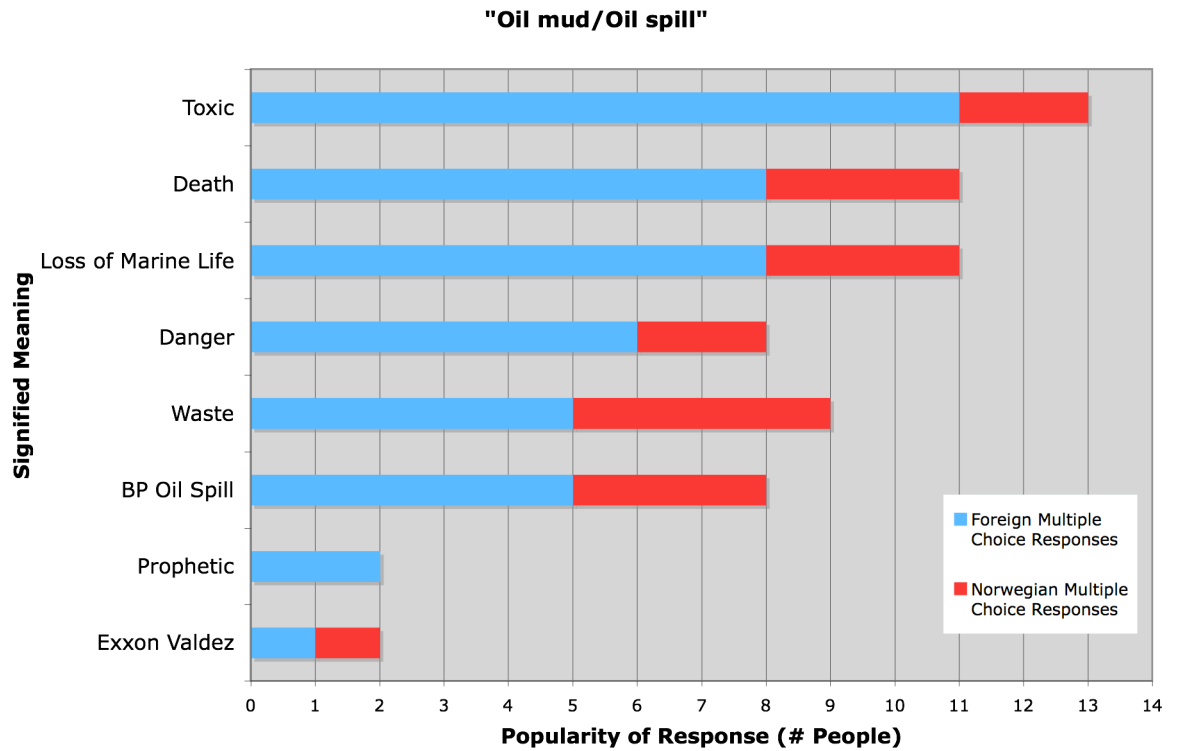
Large rusty farm rake "Other" write-in responses:

- Modernization (Industrialisation)
- Negative impact of industrialization on Norwegian nature
- Capitalism
- Trading new for old
- Old society is dead and a new society, bent on oil and profit, is taking over
- Old obsolescent industry
- Sinking industry



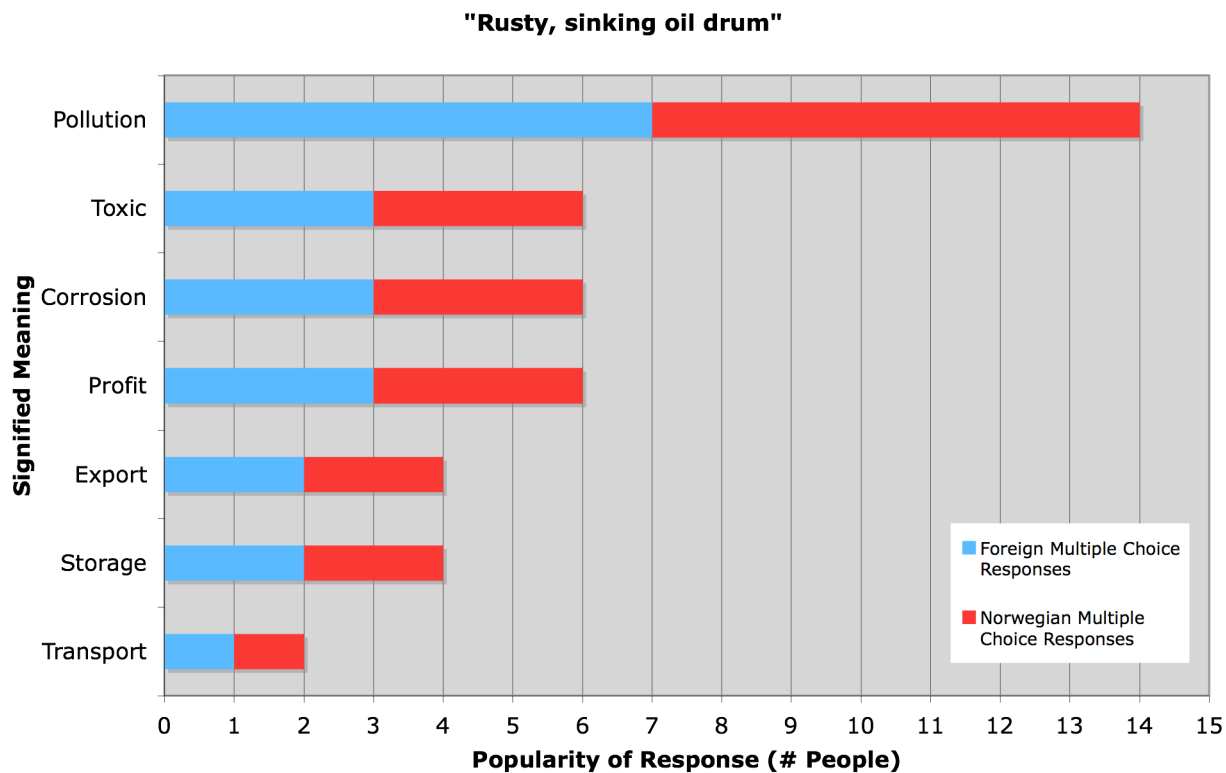
Sinking fishing boat **"Other"** write-in responses:

- Depletion of fish stocks
- How man destroys his environment (nature)
- Neglect
- Capitalism
- Decay
- Loss of marine life
- Loss of culture
- Old, obsolete industry



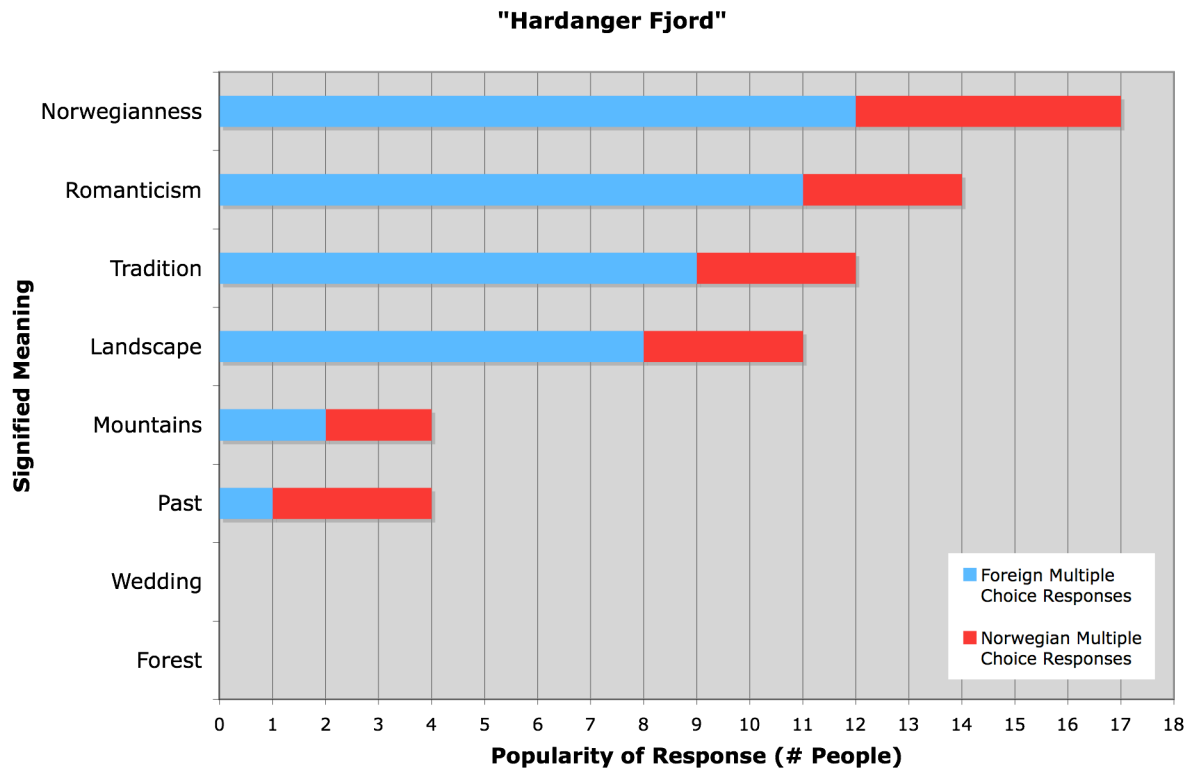
Oil mud/Oil spill **"Other"** write-in responses:

- Carelessness
- Exploitation
- Fear
- Focus on profits from oil extraction



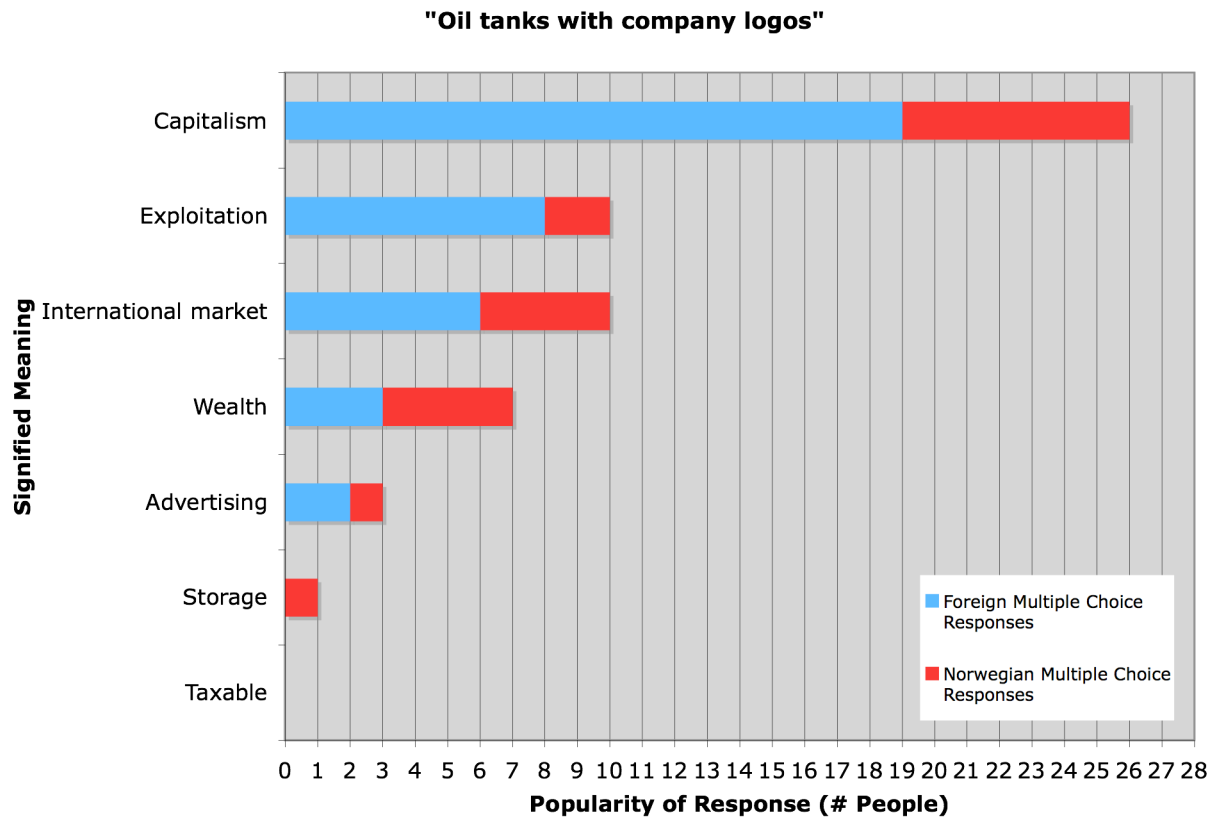
Rusty, sinking oil drum **"Other"** write-in responses:

- Death



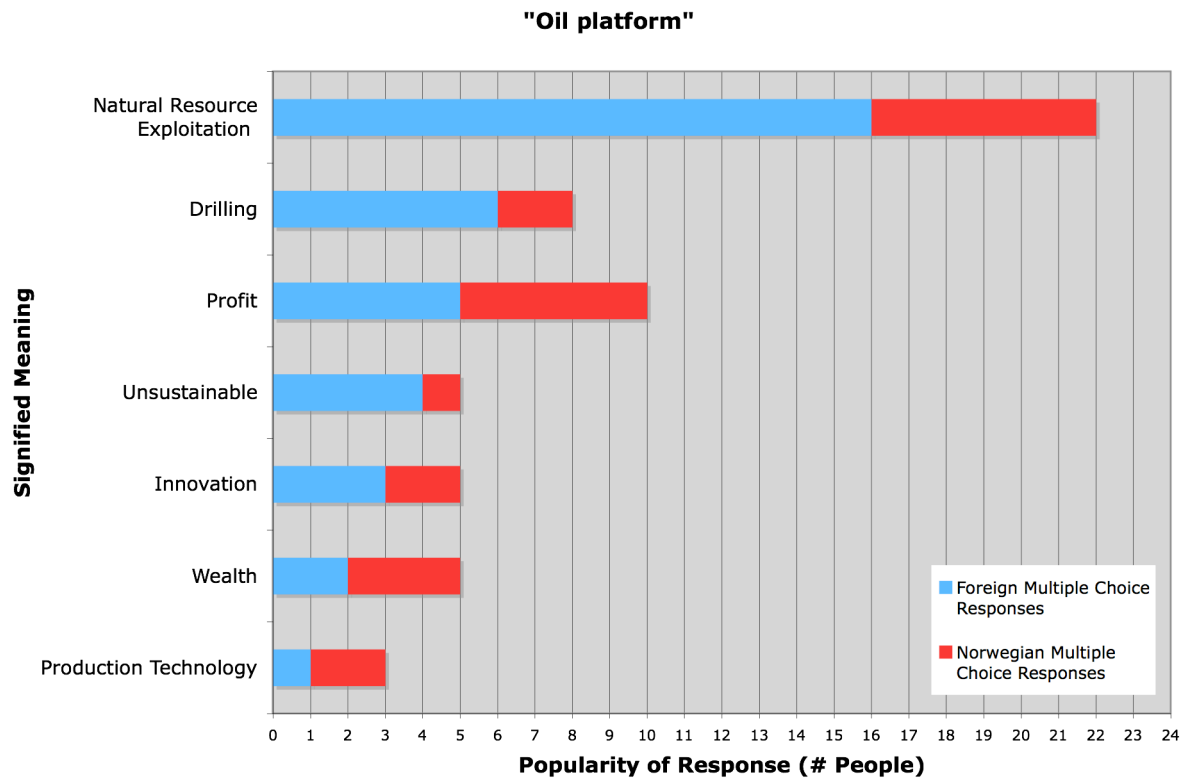
Hardanger fjord "**Other**" write-in responses:

- Loss of nature/environment
- Destruction of nature/environment
- Glaciers/fjords
- Tidemand and Gude (x2)



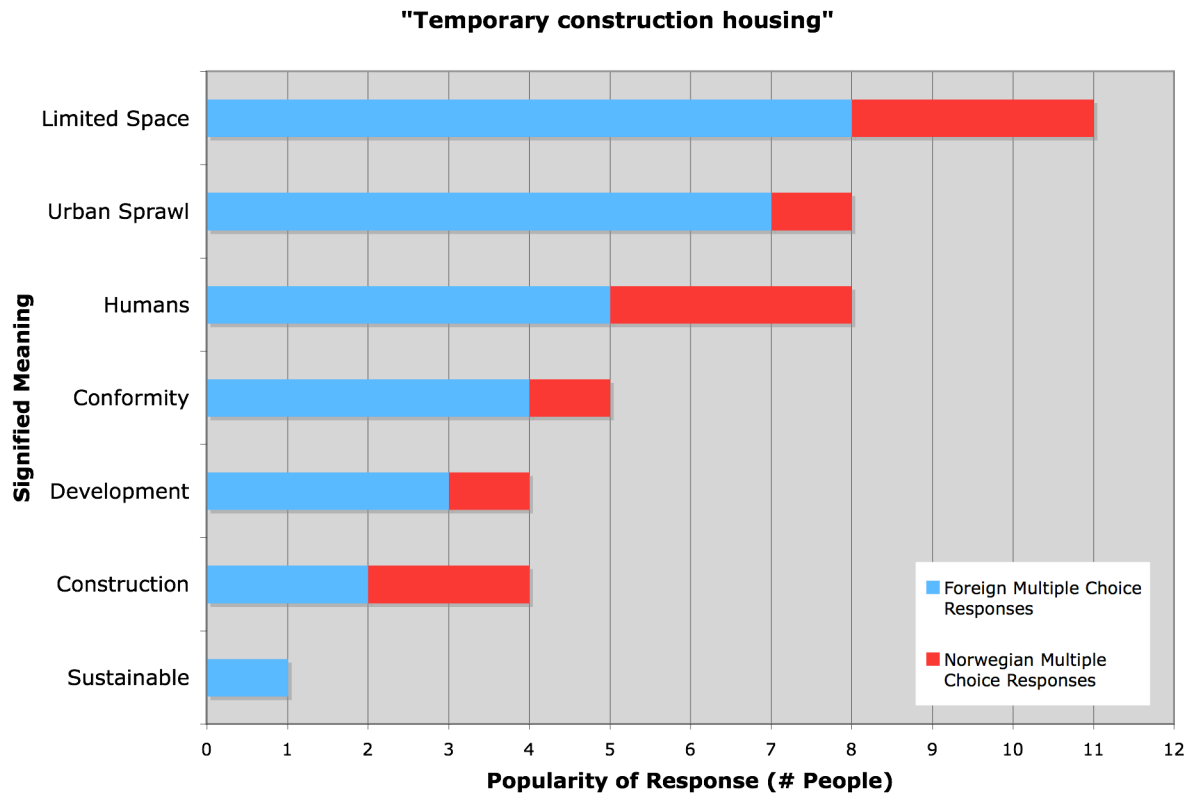
Oil tanks with company logos **"Other"** write-in responses:

- America taking over
- Globalization



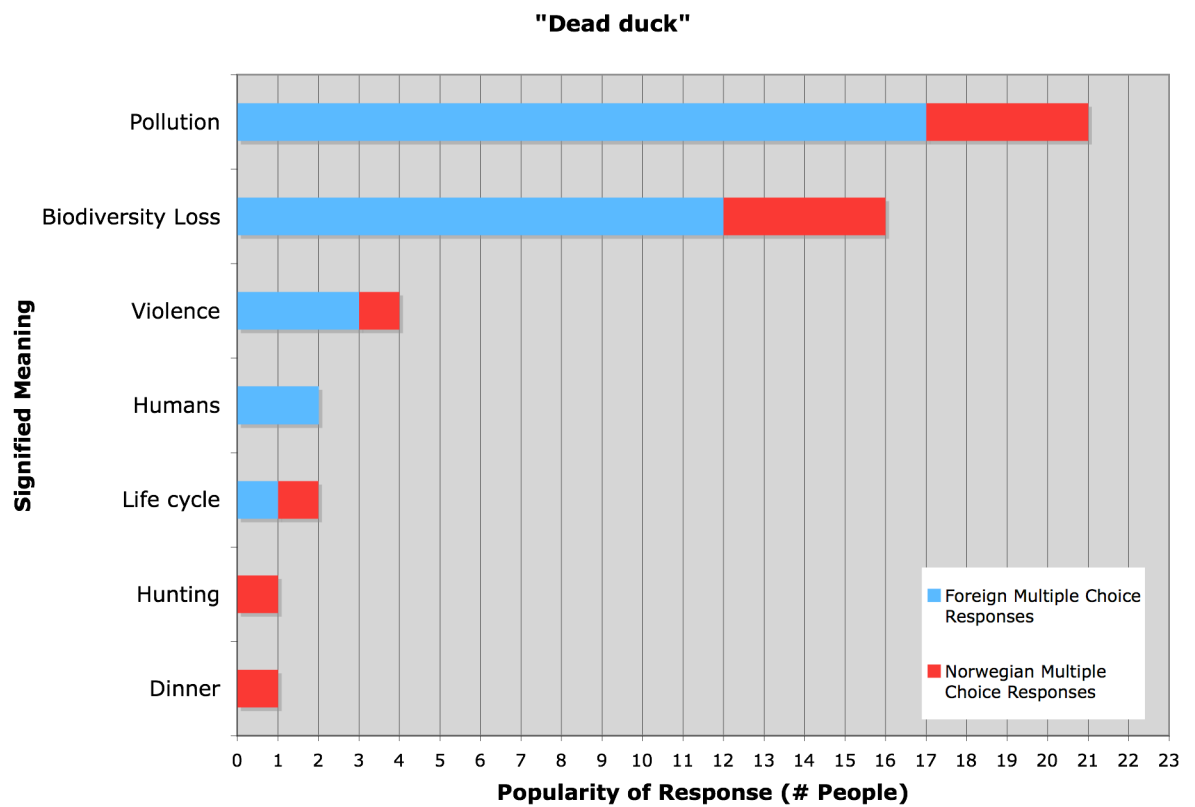
Oil platform "**Other**" write-in responses:

- Man trying to take over nature
- Pollution



Temporary construction housing **"Other"** write-in responses:

- Cheap living- seems as if they are using the land only for the production of oil
- Colonization
- Necessity
- Man trying to take over nature
- Urbanization

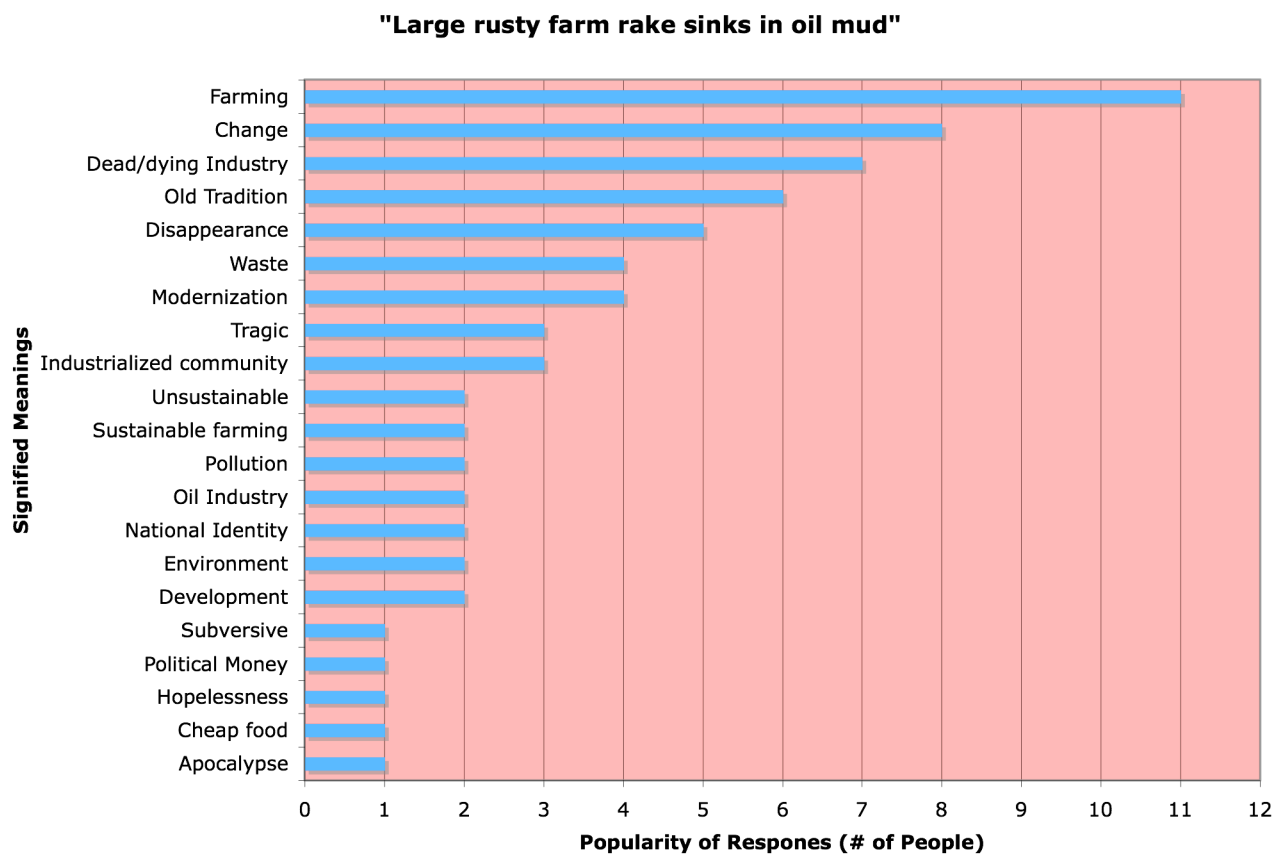


Dead duck **"Other"** write-in responses:

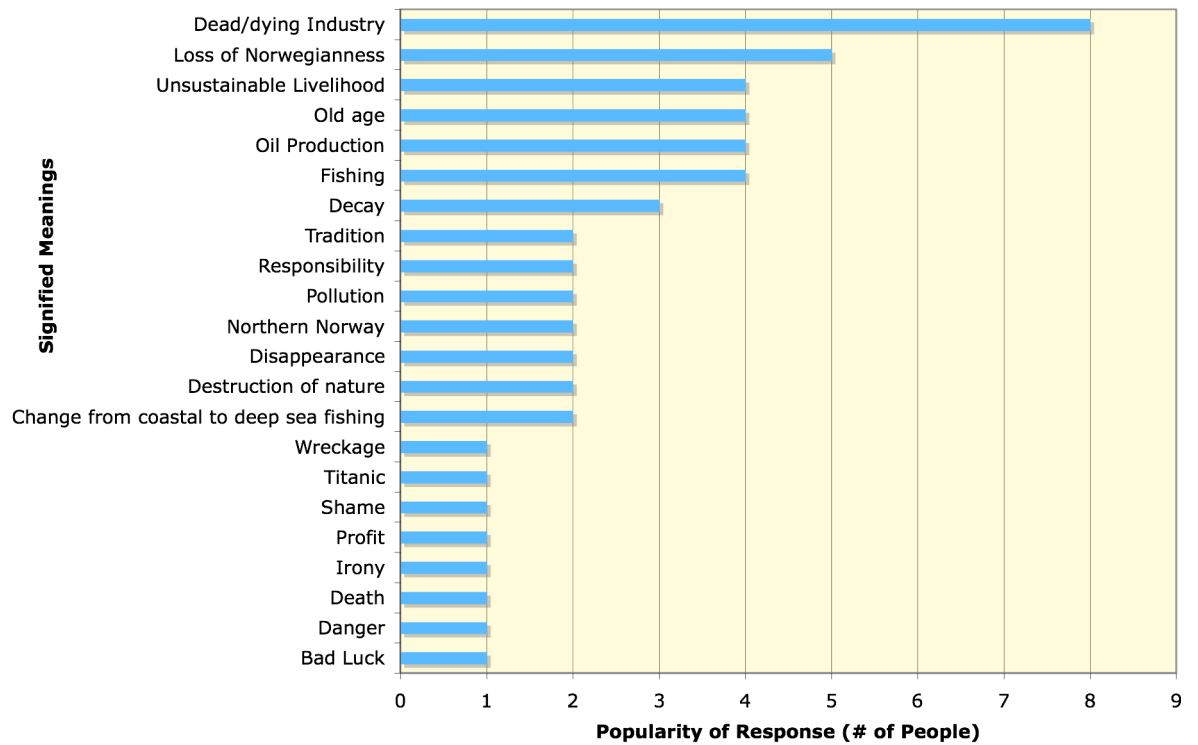
- Sadness

Appendix 4 - Semi-guided and Open-ended Responses

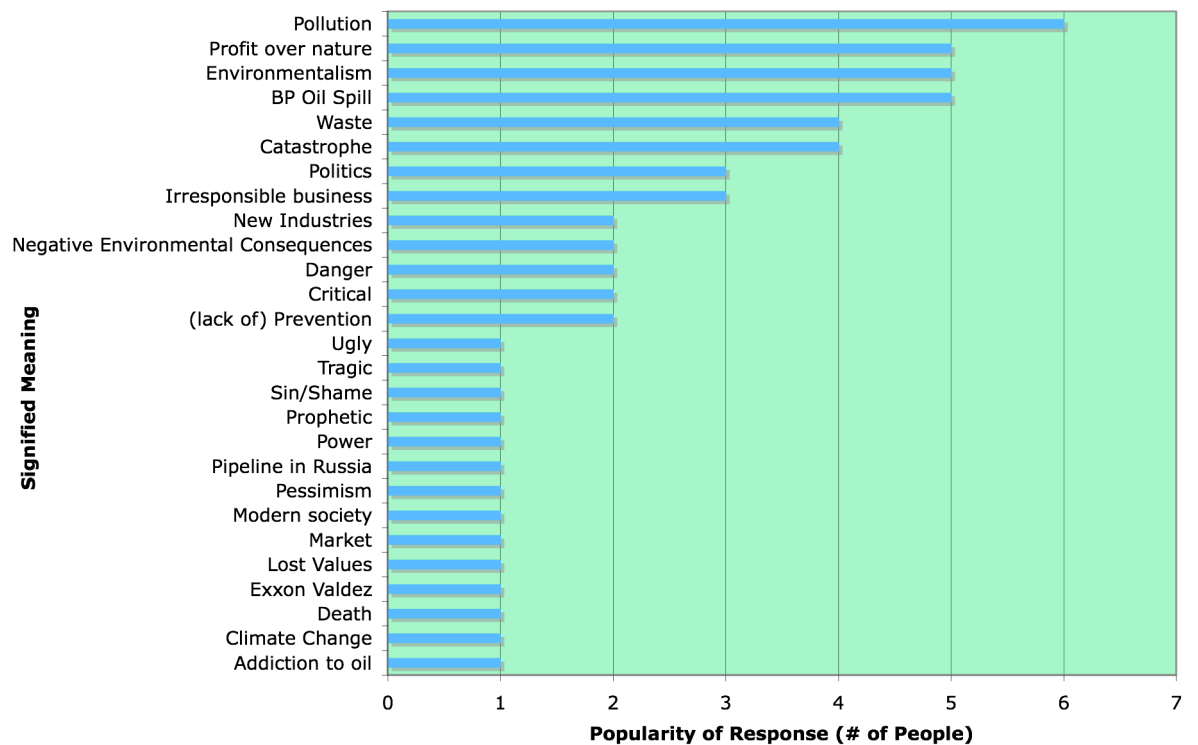
35 people responded to the semi-guided and open-ended questionnaires, which were all in Norwegian. Signified meanings that people wrote in are listed on the left of each graph. Only one person chose to respond to the open-ended questionnaire and they wrote in all of the same signifiers that I put on the semi-guided questionnaire with one addition: "just rock/mountain."



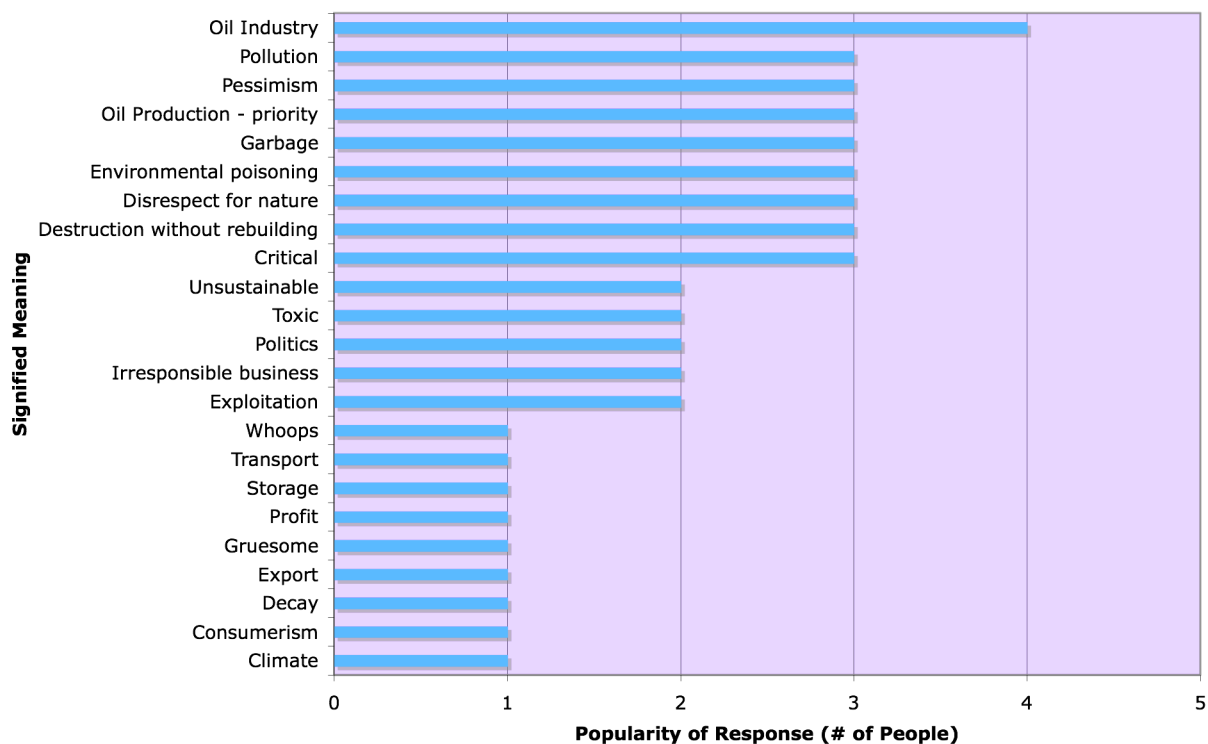
"Sinking Fishing Boat"



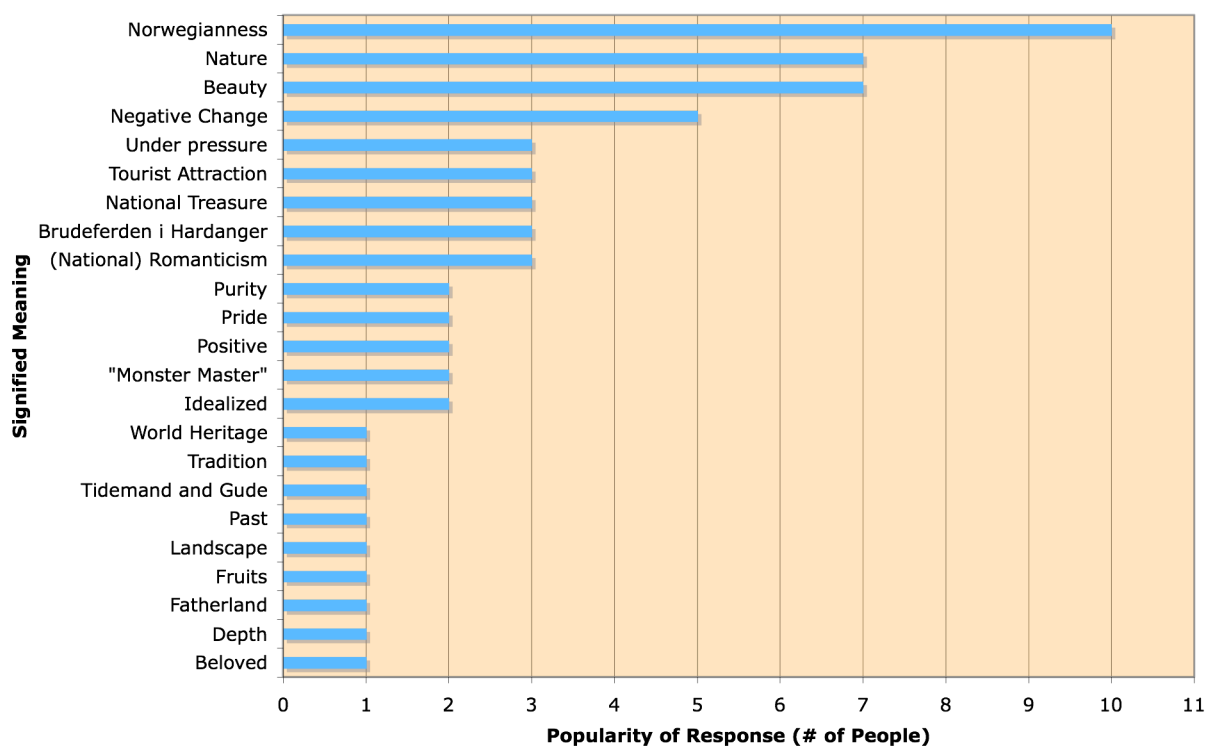
"Oil spill/oil mud"



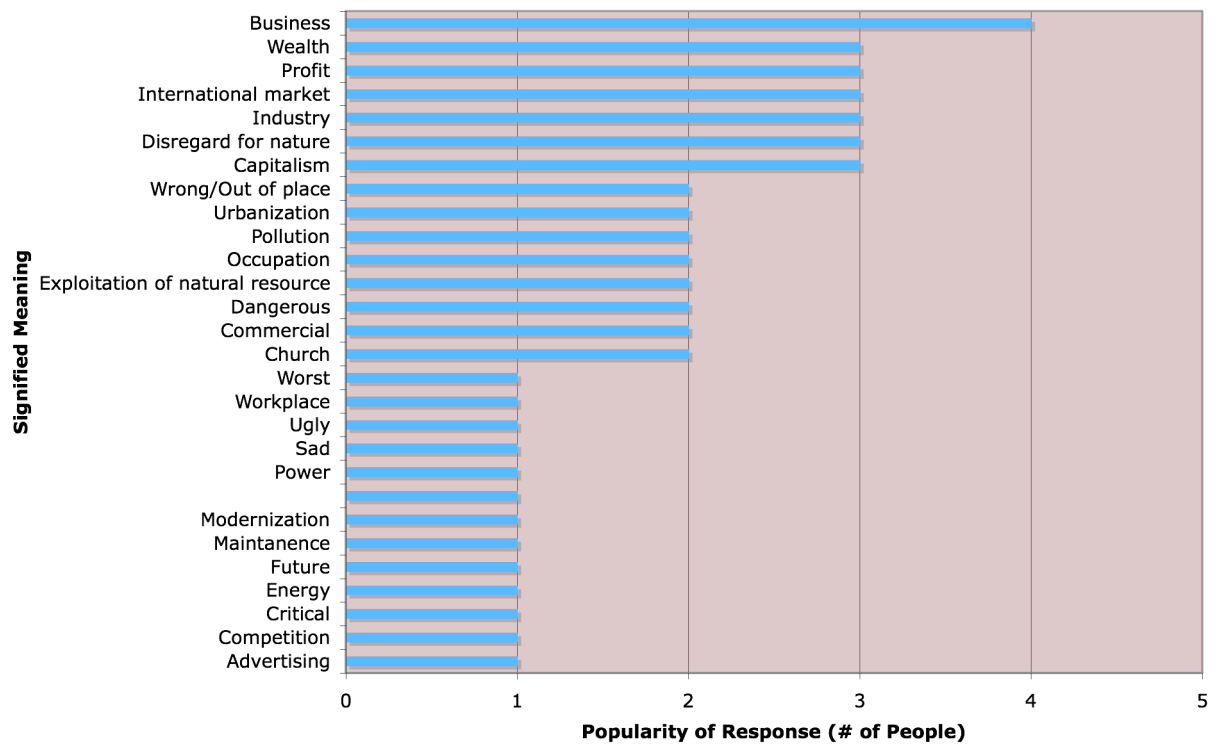
"Rusty, sinking oil drum"



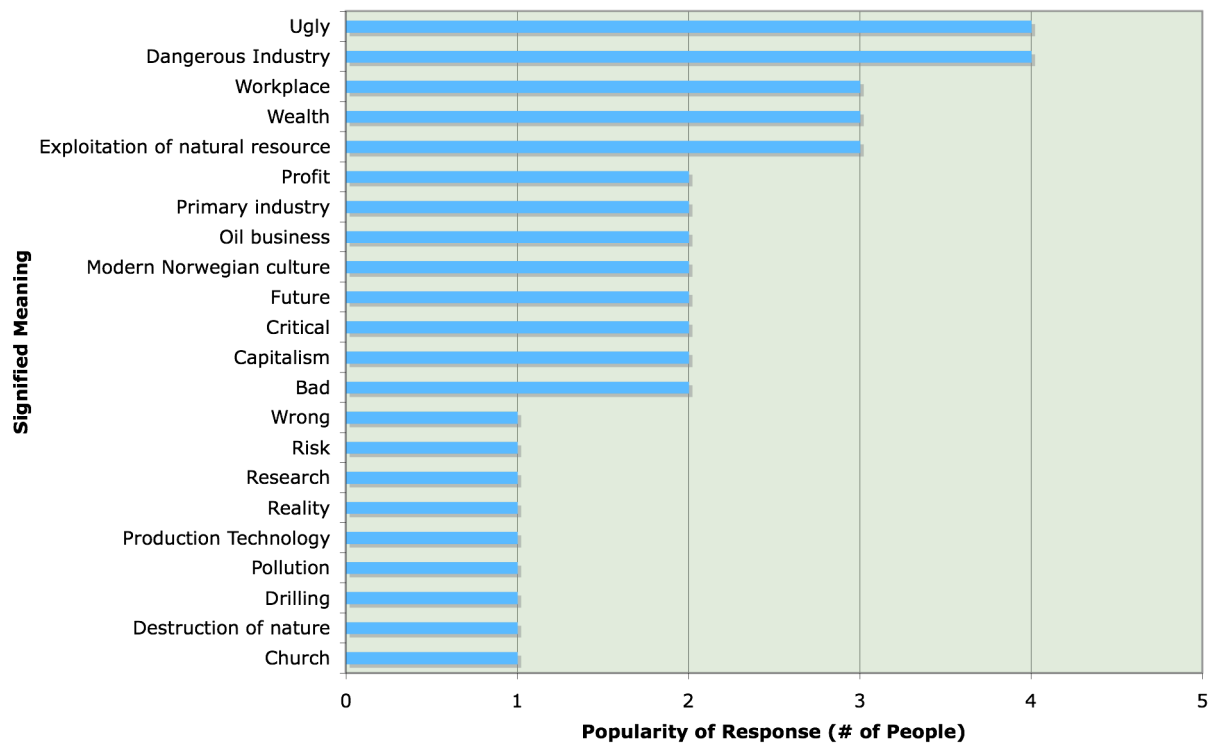
"Hardanger Fjord"

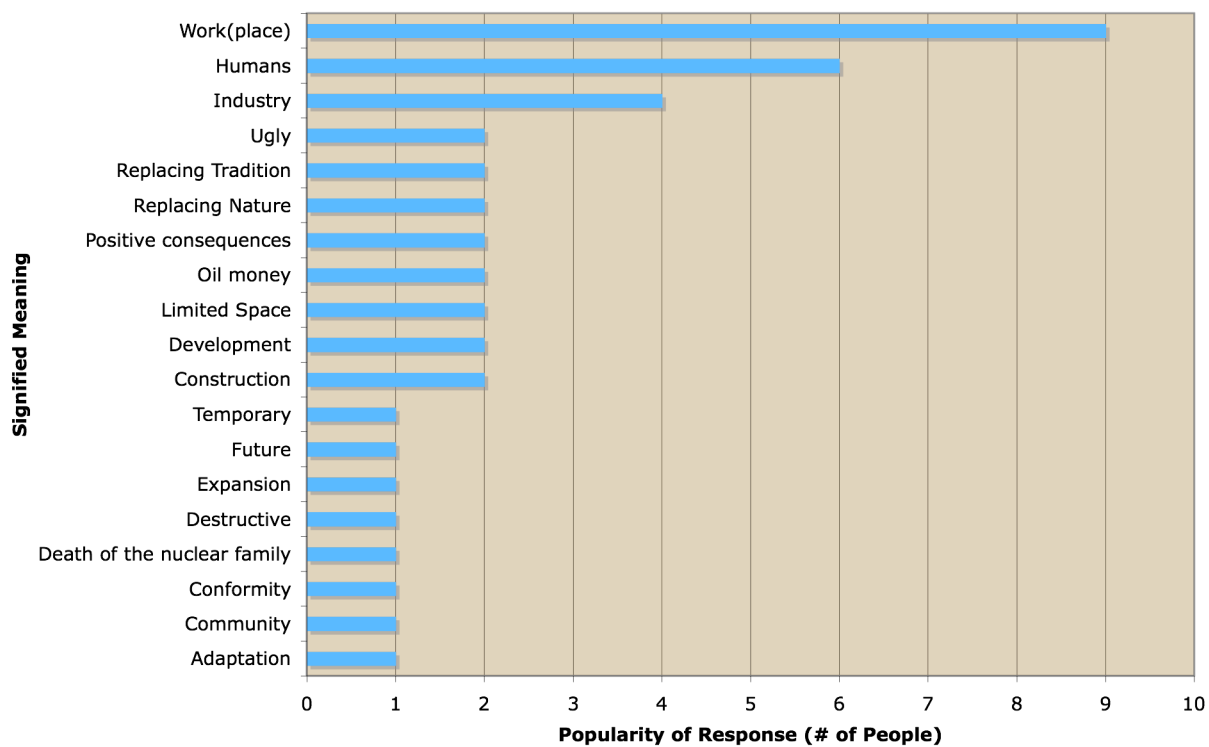
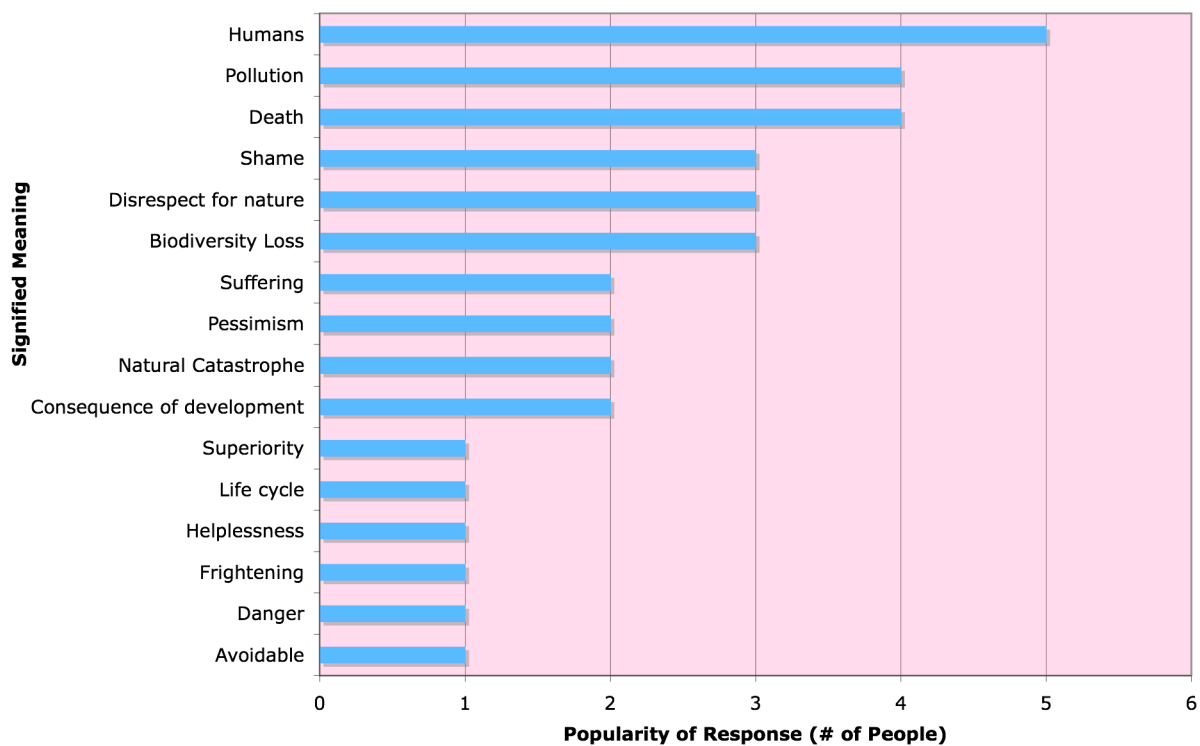


"Oil tanks with company logos"



"Oil platform"



"Temporary construction housing"**"Dead duck"**

Appendix 5 - Short Answer Responses

#1

Sinking boat - pollution

Oil tanks with company logos - urbanization, modernization

Oil drum - environmental poisoning

Bare mountain - nature disappears

#4

Oil tanks with company logos – Oil tanks took over for the church. Greed and money are more important than aesthetics and environment. Multinational oil companies don't care much about the environment.

Oil Spill – Gloomy outlook for how nature (or the world) will look if we don't get a grip. (BP- Mexico Gulf, Exxon (Valdez) spill)

Temporary Construction Housing – The scenic area is inhabited by workers, not to live but to work temporarily.

Farm Rake – Environmentally friendly self-sustaining farming is thrown in the dumpster.

Sinking ship – Bridal party in the original symbolizes national pride and a happy moment in life. The sinking ship might show how the "Norwegian dream" has sunk at the advantage of oil and progress.

Short Answer – Brudeferden i Hardanger has, for a long time, been a symbol of the "most Norwegian Norwegian," the pure beautiful nature. In the last few years (and also like the '70s) oil has become one of the most important industries in Norway. The politicians talk about environment, greenhouse gasses, CO₂ purification (*CCS) and continue to pump tons of oil out of the sea. Nature is not the most important thing, it's money.

Missing church – Norwegian society has become less and less religious in the past years. The church in the original is a stavkirke, which symbolizes Norwegian culture.

#5

Rake - Industrial Society has itself in a "stranglehold" [drowning itself] Rake is a product of industry.

Sinking Boat - An old Norwegian industry is defeated

"Natural" resources will be replaced by oil - Norway goes from poor to rich.

Oil spill- symbol of that wealth has a dark side, namely pollution.

Oil that gives us wealth, also spoils our nature - will probably show that the focus on money and material goods brings with it spoiling of society.

Oil Drum - Barrels are storing oil, but they do not last forever. They rust and sink. Can be a symbol that oil is finite.

Hardanger Fjord – Hardanger fjord is often seen as typically Norwegian. The area is now contaminated with oil. Signifies that Norway is changing, maybe a change with more minus than plus sides.

Oil tanks with company logos - In the original version showed a church here. Have oil and money become the new religion?

Oil Platform –

Temporary Housing Construction - Signifies the folks who are working in the oil industry

Dead duck - The consequences of the emissions.

#8

Rake – Norwegian farming is drowning/disappearing

Fishing boat – Norwegian fishing industry is drowning/disappearing

Oil spill – The new industries are destroying nature

Rusty oil tank- The new oil industry is not sustainable

Hardanger Fjord – The heart of Norway, which is occupied (*like military occupation) in Groven's picture

Oil tanks with logos – USA occupies us

Oil platform – The cathedrals of the new era

Temporary Construction Housing – The new era's architecture (it's supposed to be a church!)

Dead duck – Neither people nor animals can live with this

Short answer – He, of course, says that it doesn't exist but first and foremost, the picture says something about how our nature and the culture that has sprung out of it are now occupied by a different culture, which has just one aim – profit.

Norwegian nature is the most important thing (traditionally) for developing Norwegian culture.

No Church – Mammon (christian figure representing wealth and greed) is now God and has eradicated the church.

I, of course, miss the Gudefolket (*folk characters) and the fiddle player.

#10

Rake – the decline of farming

Fishing boat – fishing is overtaken by pollution, oil production

Oil spill – critical of Norwegian oil politics

Rusty oil tank- ""

Hardanger Fjord – Something pure and beautiful like in Tidemand and Gude's painting

Oil tanks with logos – critical of oil business

Oil platform – ""

Temporary Construction Housing – We build down nature

Dead duck – Pollution of oil

Short answer – Defective environmental policy. It doesn't stop the destruction of nature and landscape. Nature [has] meaning in art (like in Tidemand and Gude's painting), music like Grieg's, Norwegian fairy tales, Wergeland, Hamsun and friluftskulturen.

No Church – Church is not involved enough in protecting creation/nature.

#13

Rake – We destroy our livelihoods; farming is changed - it is no longer sustainable; we think more of profit than to grow in harmony with nature; the mantra today is cheap food

Fishing boat – by destroying nature, we also destroy our livelihoods; for fishermen/fishing, oil is more important than real life; profit is paramount

Oil spill – the oil industry becomes more important than nature; we poison the sea/our livelihoods; we do not concern ourselves with cleaning up litter

Rusty oil tank - Production of oil is prioritized ahead of nature; we prioritize profit and don't clean up after ourselves; we poison ourselves by destroying our livelihoods

Hardanger Fjord – The most Norwegian of the Norwegian; National Romantic; The ideal - we idealize the past

Oil tanks with logos – Symbolize capitalistic forces; the market and wealth are more important than nature.

Oil platform – A symbol for how we exploit nature on our own terms, not nature's terms

Temporary Construction Housing – Human beings who adapt, a symbol for the development we adapted

Dead duck – Biodiversity loss, which constantly grows; that we adapt on our own terms without taken nature into account

Short answer – That we are on the wrong track. That we should stop to think about what it is we want.

That we must change our course, to live and organize our lives in harmony with nature.

Living in a way that is sustainable, not just take our adaptation.

Have values other than wealth and profit.

No Church – Have never thought about that...

The church will never/rarely work against the destruction of nature.

In Christinity, human beings are placed above nature.

#14

Rake – political money, environment, old traditions

Fishing boat – Norway in flux, pessimism, Northern-Norway

Oil spill – Catastrophe; pessimism; politics

Rusty oil tank - pessimism about the future; demonstration?; politics

Hardanger Fjord – Norwegian, deep, proud

Oil tanks with logos – Sad, business, future

Oil platform – Future, money, reality

Temporary Construction Housing – Future, Norwegian buildings, industry

Dead duck – Pessimism, death, environment

Short answer – They are trying to bring something holy to many people and show us that the price of progress through death and depravity. Nature = pure = holy = Norwegian.

We are romantics when it comes to nature.

No Church – We are secular, religion is not important and excessive.

#14

Rake – tragic, pollution, hopelessness

Fishing boat – decay, age, shame

Oil spill – pollution, tragedy, sin

Rusty oil tank- pollution, whoops, some have bad attitudes

Hardanger Fjord – beauty, Norwegian, severe

Oil tanks with logos – pollution, wrong - should not be here, ugly

Oil platform – bad, very wrong, ugly

Temporary Construction Housing – ugly, destroys, work

Dead duck – natural catastrophe, pollution, sin/shame

Short answer – He tries to say that we are not far away from an environmental catastrophe is we don't watch out. We are doing a lot that can go wrong and he wants us to be mindful of that.

No Church – Norway is a land where the church/Christianity has lost its meaning.

#21

Short answer – The economic development has, every time and every national activity of any significance, been prioritized before environmental politics.

No Church – The church is not very actively participating in the environmentalist works.

#22

Rake – Consequences of the "modern community, [modernization?]" uncontrolled development, desires for the vision from 1975 is not happening

Fishing boat – bad maintenance, fishing is destroyed, deliberating research on fish politics

Oil spill – political control, if the market's power is released

Rusty oil tank- the back side of the oil age

Hardanger Fjord – Food for thought in the discussion about "monste-masta" (*power line poles they want to put up in Hardanger)

Oil tanks with logos –

Oil platform –

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck –

Short answer –

No Church –

#23

Rake – The end for Norway as a farming nation, change, National opinion changes

Fishing boat – The end for Norway as a fishing nation, change, Northern-Norway becomes depopulated

Oil spill – Negative environmental consequences

Rusty oil tank- without consideration, Irresponsible business

Hardanger Fjord – National Romantic

Oil tanks with logos – capitalism

Oil platform – capitalism, workplace, technological development

Temporary Construction Housing – workplace, positive consequences

Dead duck – humans' sense of superiority, humans' welfare is more valuable than nature and animal life

Short answer – Groven tries to say something about the future of Norway the oil nation. The National Romantic "Brudeferden i Hardanger" is used by Groven as a powerful tool to draw a stark contrast to Norway's future. Nature is the symbol of Norway's beauty. High mountains, deep valleys and Hardanger Fjord, Norway's pride. By painting this picture, Groven protests against a hostile environmental policy. He says that oil makes Norway rich, but at the same time it destroys that which brings this land together to form a nation.

No Church – This means that capitalism has become our new religion. To remove the church and replace it with an Esso petrol tank is an expression that oil money and greed take over for charity and morality.

#24

Rake – From a farming culture to industry?

Fishing boat – death, danger

Oil spill – climate, change

Rusty oil tank- climate, decay

Hardanger Fjord – Attraction, world heritage, nature

Oil tanks with logos –industry, energy, workplace

Oil platform – research, search/quest

Temporary Construction Housing – Job, workers

Dead duck – Life

Short answer –

No Church –

#25

Rake – Eradication of old Norwegian farms

Fishing boat –

Oil spill – pollution

Rusty oil tank-

Hardanger Fjord – destruction of nature

Oil tanks with logos – big business takes over nature

Oil platform – pollution

Temporary Construction Housing – workplace and expansion, replaces farms and traditional things

Dead duck – destruction of nature and animals

Short answer – that our way of life and our pollution destroys the fine nature Norway once had.

No Church – there was a church in the old image. This could mean that the religion in Norway - Christianity - has been washed away in many ways.

#28

Short answer – Nature has everything to say for Norwegian culture. That is, nature is culture. We live off of nature. That is, nature is Norway. We are totally dependent on preserving our beautiful nature.

No Church – Human beings! There is no human being who wishes to exist in a destroyed nature.

#29

Rake – Oil industry,

Fishing boat – Oil painting

Oil spill –

Rusty oil tank-

Hardanger Fjord – Brudeferden i Hardanger

Oil tanks with logos –

Oil platform –

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck –

Short answer – Nature has great meaning for Norwegian culture. No nature, no Norway. I don't know whether Rolf Groven is skeptical about Norwegian environmental politics.

No Church – He traded the church for oil refinery because the church doesn't have as much symbolic meaning as an oil refinery would have.

#33

Rake – farming comes apart

Fishing boat – decay

Oil spill – ugly, archipelago

Rusty oil tank- Garbage, gruesome

Hardanger Fjord – beautiful, apparently; easy; nice to look at

Oil tanks with logos – Commercial; do not fit in

Oil platform – =mountain

Temporary Construction Housing – community; people live off of ...

Dead duck – Don't see it; Nature goes under

Short answer – Nature has much to give to people. Recreation, inspiration and energy.

Groven's painting puts one in bad humour.

No Church – Nei.

#34

Rake – Norwegian farming small; environmentalist attitude

Fishing boat – Fishing industry's responsibility to take care of their "work equipment" and respect the environment

Oil spill – It's important to prevent the escape by keeping the boat "in order" and paying attention to weather and the use of 'los'

Rusty oil tank- Important to deliver such environmentally hazardous things to the right place

Hardanger Fjord – National treasure and tourist attraction

Oil tanks with logos – companies take care of their oil tanks

Oil platform – ___ take the platforms and security with the idea of risk/catastrophe

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck – pollution

Short answer – We like to portray ourselves as "environmental agents" but protection of nature is not good enough. There is a high contrast between [this] and the National Romantic "Brudeferden..."

No Church – Where is God?

#35

Rake – earlier farming culture which is in the process of rusting away/becoming litter

Fishing boat – Old traditions disappear, eaten up by big industries; no longer a sustainable livelihood

Oil spill – The littering of "natural treasure," pollution

Rusty oil tank- lack of will to clean up own mess. Destruction without rebuilding

Hardanger Fjord – A symbol for national pride, but the reality is different

Oil tanks with logos – Competition to take over

Oil platform – exploitation of nature

Temporary Construction Housing –conformity of opinion (all barracks are the same), small protests. Ignorance they serve this (?)

Dead duck – The nature which suffers under this

Short answer – that Norwegian nature, and what we see as a symbol of Norway, will be littered. We protect her ourselves, but pollute foreign places

No Church – secularization, loss of [magic?]

#36

Rake – the "good old" culture disappears, taken over by the new

Fishing boat – The old must give over to the new

Oil spill – Actions that are carried out without thought;

Rusty oil tank- destruction today, how little we care

Hardanger Fjord – the majority think positively about that - like "typical Norwegian culture"

Oil tanks with logos – How the urban takes over

Oil platform – Norwegian "modern culture"

Temporary Construction Housing – Norway has become industrialized

Dead duck – What this development leads to

Short answer – Nature has always been something we strongly [identify with]/define ourselves by. Now we only walk away, as seen in "Oljemaleri." We destroy our culture and also lose ourselves.

No Church - [cars], where are the [cars], they are also with the destroyed.... Perhaps only the oil industry remains because Norway is an oil nation

#37

Rake – Apocalypse

Fishing boat – Titanic

Oil spill –

Rusty oil tank-

Hardanger Fjord – Our dear FATHERLAND;

Oil tanks with logos –

Oil platform – don't like that

Temporary Construction Housing – That's okay

Dead duck – frightening

Short answer – that is a good commentary on Tidemand and Gude

No Church – The apocalypse - the end time - there is much prophecy in this

#38

Rake – primary industry in decay; pollution

Fishing boat – primary industry in decay

Oil spill – pollution,

Rusty oil tank- pollution, little respect for nature

Hardanger Fjord – symbol for fine nature; referencing Brudeferden...

Oil tanks with logos – money rules; profit before nature/environment

Oil platform – money

Temporary Construction Housing – oil-money

Dead duck –

Short answer – "Brudeferden..." is a symbol of the Norwegian National Romantic and the value of the Norwegian nature.

Groven believes that we cast aside these values in favor of profit.

No Church – Don't know

#39

Rake – Oil overtakes Norwegian farming

Fishing boat – it is no longer profitable to fish

Oil spill – extreme exploitation of oil over consideration for nature; profit wins

Rusty oil tank - No one cares about the consequences of oil extraction

Hardanger Fjord – Our most beloved nature is exploited

Oil tanks with logos – the richest companies are the worst; they do not worry about presenting their names/logos because "everyone" does this

Oil platform – modern times vs. original painting

Temporary Construction Housing – it is human beings who stand for the decay

Dead duck – no respect for nature

Short answer – [the phrase] "Oljemaleri" normally has a positive connotation - here it is the opposite.

Environmental politics (and politicians) are absent.

No Church – I don't believe that has a particular meaning. The church applies to "Brudeferden" because that is natural/normal.

#42

Rake – Modern farming has taken over for the traditional; industrial farming takes over; sustainable farming is losing the battle

Fishing boat – fishing industry is in flux; coastal fishing out, ocean [deep sea] fishing in

Oil spill – the nature is lost in modern society

Rusty oil tank- too much garbage - refers to a consumerist society

Hardanger Fjord – cultural landscape under [stress/]pressure

Oil tanks with logos – multinational companies have "destroyed" Norway

Oil platform – Industry and workplaces vs. primary industry

Temporary Construction Housing – Industry and workplaces vs. primary industry

Dead duck – our existence is in danger

Short answer – Environmental politics have lost at the expense of workplaces and industry. Critique of "strong socialism." Groven's "Oljemaeri" is a critique of Norwegians and politicians' "care" for our natural foundation (naturgrunnlag)

No Church – In a more and more secularized society, believe in the good life, created by a background of our natural foundation, no longer stands in the human realm.

#43

Rake –

Fishing boat – primary industry's decent/end; destruction of the coastal culture

Oil spill – need for environmentalists; a call to raise the social consciousness toward the environment

Rusty oil tank- cynical [?] exploitation of natural resources without care for the environment

Hardanger Fjord – a key symbol for Norwegian nature

Oil tanks with logos – responsible for the exploitation for natural resources

Oil platform – responsible for the exploitation for natural resources; cynicism connected to profiteering

Temporary Construction Housing – the typical workers' loss of quality of life and the death of the nuclear family

Dead duck – nature/wildlife's decline in relation to cynical (?) natural resource exploitation

Short answer – Groven was known in his time - in 1975 - for setting the focus on environmentalism. Environmentalism was founded in Norway at that time and the decision to use a national icon such as "Brudeferden i Hardanger" was very controversial.

I can, myself, recall the first time I saw this image and it made a big impression at that time.

Norwegian nature has, since the last half of the 1800s, had deep meaning for Norwegian culture. That is constantly changing today to an ever-increasing degree.

No Church – the church's lost meaning in oil-centered society

#45

Rake – all economic interests, unfinished in their accomplishments, also the last link must be financed toward full restitution

Fishing boat – ""

Oil spill – "Deep water horizon" can happen overall, the bad consequences of explorative hastiness. It is with spills this that the affection disappears for the many irresponsible "bosses"

Rusty oil tank - Norway has 56000km of coastline - so much responsibility can only create real responsibility. Financial crisis allows irresponsible management, wrong action

Hardanger Fjord – Eternal beauty. Now the bridge will be finished in 2013. Air lines, or cables 2. Of course, cables on the ledges along the coastal rock in a secure depth.

Oil tanks with logos – Those who have their hands on the profits much try to finish the job "restitution and integration," which, of course, is also valuable for nature

Oil platform –

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck – could have been avoided if all mode of work were "finished"

Short answer – Human beings are unfortunately short-sighted. Life is made up of the day today. (dagen i dag)

Every parliament/government and also many families live in a self-centered, closed-minded lack of perspective.

This is an agent against, but for the time being progress is placed to abolish the necessity of human beings

No Church – Beliefs today are hysterical about the economy - the past also old churches, which were lost.

#46

Rake – Machines taking over

Fishing boat – the sinking of many norms at the turn of the 19th Century; fishing is important for the Norwegian population

Oil spill – Deep water horizon in the Gulf of Mexico; pipeline in Russia

Rusty oil tank - Oil comes out quickly; pollutant dumping of poisonous oil

Hardanger Fjord – apples and other fruits; nature

Oil tanks with logos – they have taken over the world; power; no regard for nature

Oil platform – optical problem; danger

Temporary Construction Housing – large [human] influence in nature without regard for the pre-existing [life there]

Dead duck – animals are overlooked and helpless to humans' expansion. Oil companies don't care at all

Short answer – Economics are more important than to benefit nature. Temporary prosperity is more important than disappearing balance in nature. One could probably say that Norwegian environmental policy has spread over everything.

No Church – It has been a long time since church and religion have had much power in Norwegian politics. Instead of the church, there is an oil tanker in its place. Is it oil companies that now rule the land?

#49

Rake – farming community shrinks

Fishing boat – before we were a fishing nation, now we are an oil nation

Oil spill – misuse of nature; waste of our natural resources

Rusty oil tank - environmental catastrophe; economy at the expense of nature

Hardanger Fjord – Norwegian natural treasure

Oil tanks with logos – capitalistic exploitation of nature

Oil platform – the building of large ugly oil platforms which destroy our nature

Temporary Construction Housing – the oil industry creates work places in the meantime

Dead duck – it is nature, which pays the price

Short answer – He meant that we grossly exploit nature for money. Nature has great meaning for Norwegian culture. We market Norway as fresh air and bountiful nature.

No Church – The Norwegian church has lost "power" and money has taken over as the most important thing.

#50

Rake – going to waste

Fishing boat – shipwreck; oil; going to waste

Oil spill – environmental pollution; dead fish

Rusty oil tank -

Hardanger Fjord – beautiful nature

Oil tanks with logos –

Oil platform –

Temporary Construction Housing – ugly

Dead duck –

Short answer – important to protect nature

No Church –

Pilot#1

Rake – loss of tradition

Fishing boat – industry; irony

Oil spill – lost value; gloomy dependence on oil

Rusty oil tank- going to waste; eventual destruction

Hardanger Fjord – Norwegian tradition; purity; freedom

Oil tanks with logos – dangerous industry

Oil platform – dangerous industry

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck – pollution; injured nature

Short answer – that it conflicts with the Norwegian tradition of pure nature to drill for oil which destroys it

No Church – Traditions broken, nothing is holy anymore

Pilot#2

Rake – subversive; subdued

Fishing boat – end of Norwegian fishing

Oil spill –

Rusty oil tank-

Hardanger Fjord –

Oil tanks with logos –

Oil platform –

Temporary Construction Housing –

Dead duck –

Short answer –

No Church –

Pilot#3

Rake – sadness; rust

Fishing boat – bad luck; abandon

Oil spill – environment; bad decisions

Rusty oil tank- sad

Hardanger Fjord – National Romantic; pride

Oil tanks with logos – nothing special

Oil platform – money; Norwegian

Temporary Construction Housing – place and living

Dead duck – nothing

Short answer – Nature is a very large part of Norwegian culture.

No Church –

Pilot#4

Rake – shit

Fishing boat – bad for fishermen

Oil spill – the end

Rusty oil tank- bad smell in the summer
Hardanger Fjord – idyllic
Oil tanks with logos – it's all good - they've got to put something there
Oil platform – a little unrealistic
Temporary Construction Housing – where polar bears live
Dead duck – bad times?
Short answer –
No Church – that Islam is taking over

Pilot#5

Rake – contrast between nature and all the garbage
Fishing boat –
Oil spill – environmental loss
Rusty oil tank-
Hardanger Fjord – nice nature
Oil tanks with logos –
Oil platform – ugly
Temporary Construction Housing –
Dead duck – sad
Short answer – that we are bad for the environment?
No Church – irrelevant with the church in this painting

Pilot#6

Rake – sad; unnecessary
Fishing boat – dumb
Oil spill – should be illegal
Rusty oil tank- industrial community
Hardanger Fjord – beautiful; vacation; boat tour
Oil tanks with logos – BP; [oil]spill; natural catastrophe
Oil platform – economics; rich Norway; practical in the financial crisis
Temporary Construction Housing – doesn't fit in Hardanger Fjord; a place to live
Dead duck – destroyed nature; sad
Short answer – That nature is very important in Norway. Important to have environmental messages in art.
No Church – Norwegian culture has given itself over to industrial culture and capitalism. Faith has been lost. No humans.